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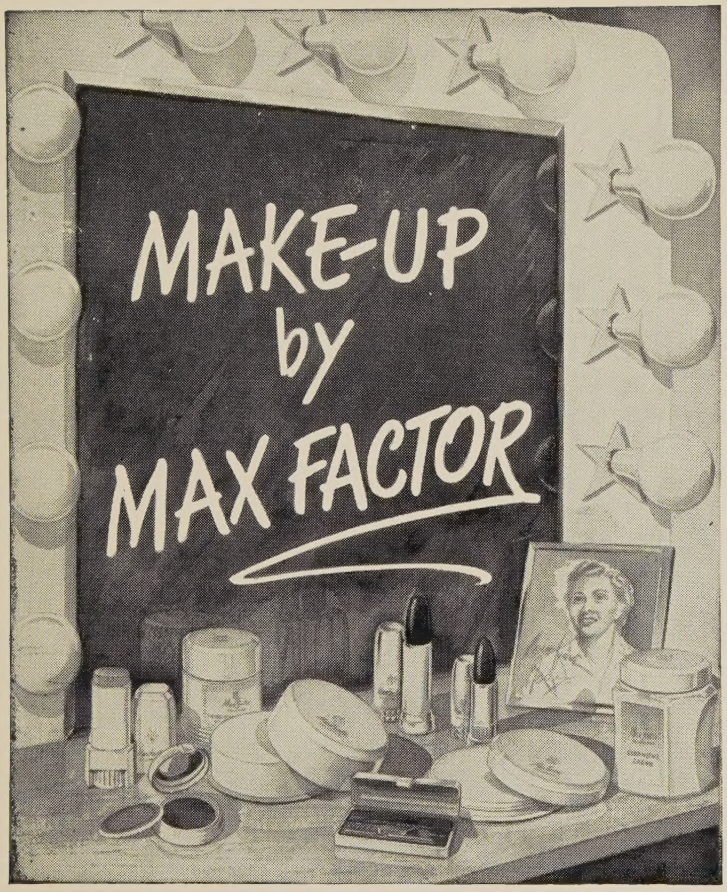
Dance and Dancers

JANUARY 1958

This month's full ballet guide

2s

JOHN GILPIN and MARILYN BURR



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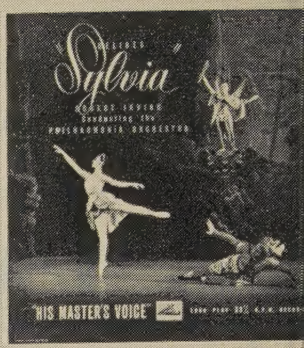

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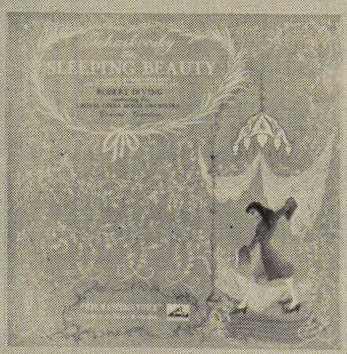

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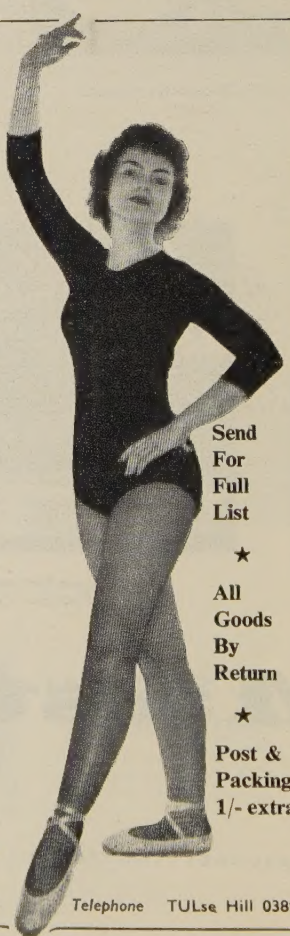

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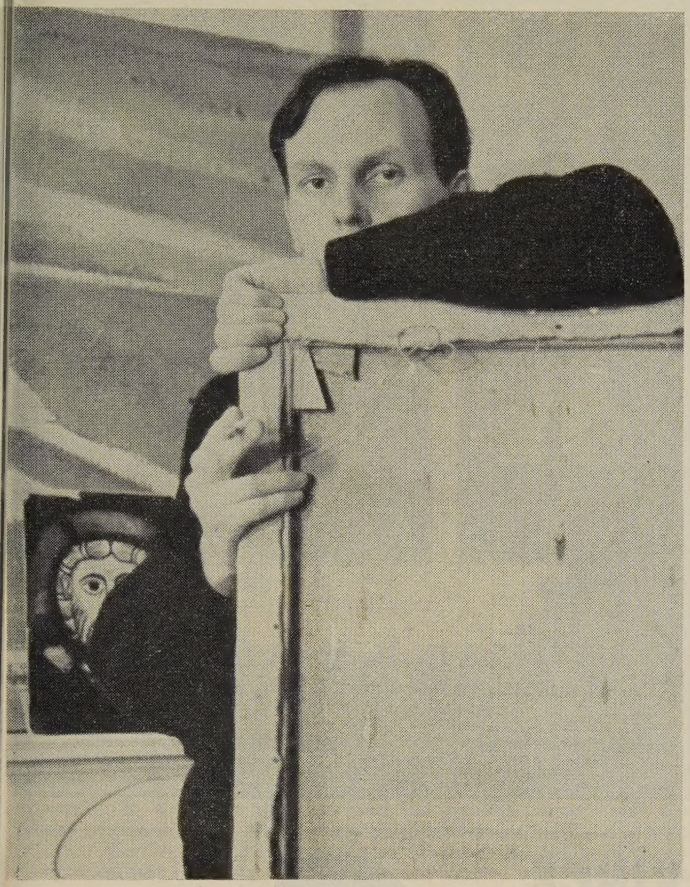

Photo: Roy Round

NICHOLAS GEORGIADIS

IF we could have just one New Year wish for British ballet it would be that its achievements in décor could equal those already made in choreography, dancing and, to a lesser extent, music. For some reason or another the part played by designers in the development of British ballet has not been a notable one It is true that we have given to the world Sophie Fedorovitch, Oliver Messel, Leslie Hurry and a handful of rather lesser names, but on the whole our designers lack originality and a personal vision. The décor and costumes for far too many English ballets have been nearly submerged by following too closely in the wake of the French and American schools of contemporary stage design.

One of the very few designers thrown up by post-war British ballet to show a mind and style of his own is the 30-year-old Greek artist Nicholas Georgiadis. He was discovered just about three years ago by Kenneth MacMillan, and the resulting partnership between these two young artists bids fair to rival the fruitful collaboration between Ashton and Fedorovitch that once dominated British ballet. It was started with MacMillan's first professional ballet, *Danses Concertantes* in 1955, and since then has produced *House of Birds*, *Noctambules*, *Winter's Eve* and, most recently, *The Burrow*.

Georgiadis first studied painting and architecture in his native Athens. He went to New York to continue his studies, and in 1952 he had his first opportunity to design a ballet, given to him by Trudy Goth's Choreographer's Workshop. In the following year he received a British Council grant to come to England, where he studied designing at the Slade School. Here he received first prize for stage design, and soon after this success came into contact with MacMillan.

The influences on his art are not particularly easy to pinpoint. Perhaps he has learnt something from the Catalan surrealist Joan Miro, and occasionally traces of Klee, are discernible in his work, but for the most part Georgiadis appears to have gone it alone. He has developed a very personal style—occasionally so personal that it has lapsed into mannerism—in which colour plays as predominating a rôle as line. Above all he is a creator of atmosphere, and as this intangible quality is the one our ballet most often needs, his advent is one of those few that makes our original New Year wish not entirely wishful thinking.

January 1958 9th YEAR OF PUBLICATION Vol. 9 No. 1

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Associate Editor:* CLIVE BARNES
Assistant Editor: E. C. MASON
WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

Don't Leave It Too Late

ALTHOUGH we can read about the great dancers of the past in books, and sometimes they are most graphically described, even so it is still difficult to imagine just *how* they danced. Did, for instance, Taglioni or Grisi dance like Markova, or Karsavina like Fonteyn? Books can tell us a lot but not, alas, the vital thing. It is only through the medium of the film that the living dance can be recorded for all time. Even from those early dance films it is still possible to get a glimmer of Pavlova's great art or of Spessivtzeva in *Giselle*; these and a few more are precious fragments for which ballet has reason to be grateful. Yet these are all bequeathed to us from the early days of film making and were mainly brought about by the enthusiasm of amateurs. Today, when the cinema, with all its wonderful machinery, has become a great science, the art of the dancer has been shamefully neglected. Of course, there has been some splendid dancing recorded in film musicals and there have been a number of attempts, of varying success, at putting ballet on the screen. In Russia they have been far more aware of the film's potentiality for filming ballet and ballerinas than in the West. Admittedly these films have not always reached the artistic heights now demanded in the cinema but, goodness, what valuable records they are!

In the whole history of ballet there have perhaps never been so many great dancers as there are today. But their day cannot last for much longer. Retirement looms ahead for many of the brightest stars in the balletic heaven and how shall we remember them? The press-handout nature of most modern criticism will give posterity a pretty befogged idea of what they were really like. Therefore it is time somebody got down to seriously filming the great performances of our time. After all the film made of the Bolshoi Ballet in London, with all its faults, was a magnificent record of performance which also turned out to be good cinema box-office. So why cannot we have similar treatment of Fonteyn in, say, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Symphonic Variations* and *Daphnis and Chloe*; Markova in *Giselle*, *Les Sylphides* and as Taglioni in *The Pas de Quatre*; Chauviré and Vyroubova in classical and modern rôles, the Tallchief sisters and so many others? Why not? Because of time and money.

The answer to that one is that it only took the Bolshoi Ballet one whole night to make the *Giselle* film which is really not taking up much time. As to money, well if nobody will come forward with a nice fat sum towards this worthy cause it should be remembered that some of our finest dancers once gave their services at a gala memorial to Anna Pavlova. A few similar gala performances would make enough money to start the ball rolling and it seems the least that the dancers of today can do towards providing a living memorial to our great ones.

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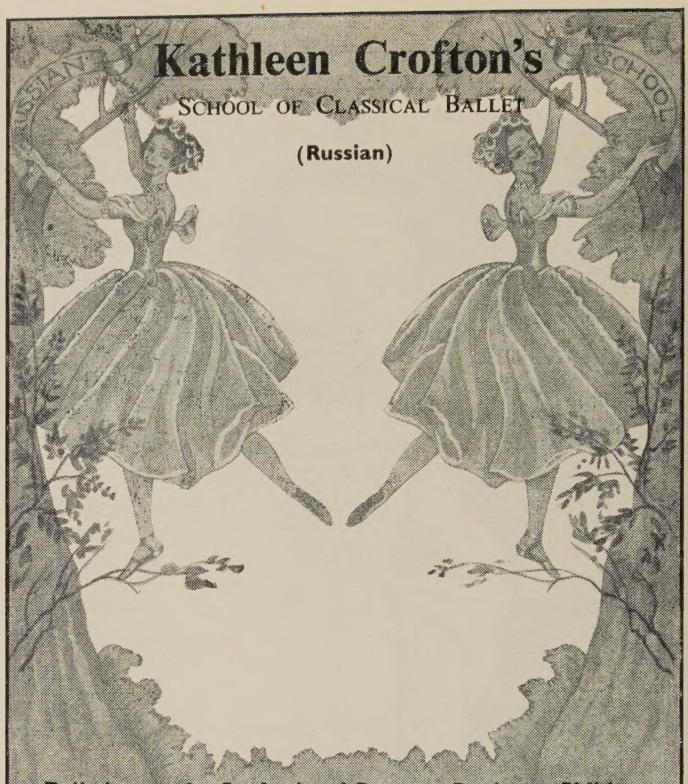

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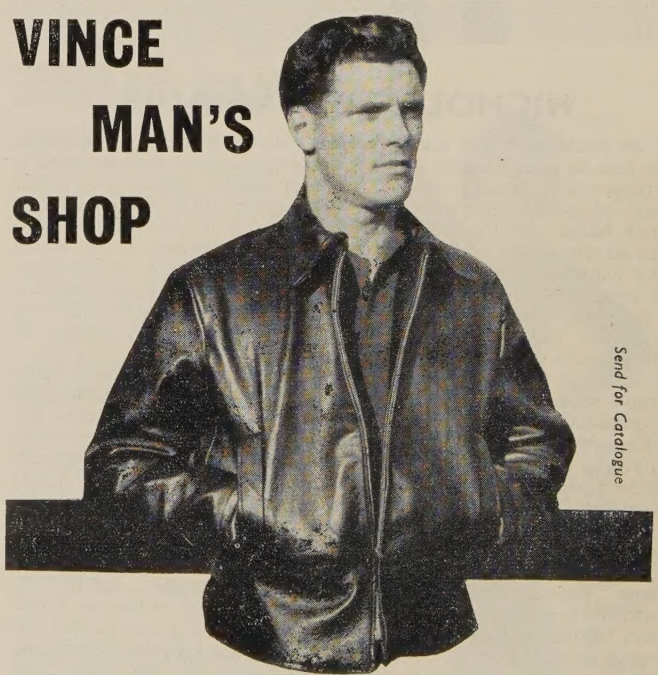

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SUSAN ALEXANDER
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NOREEN SOPWITH
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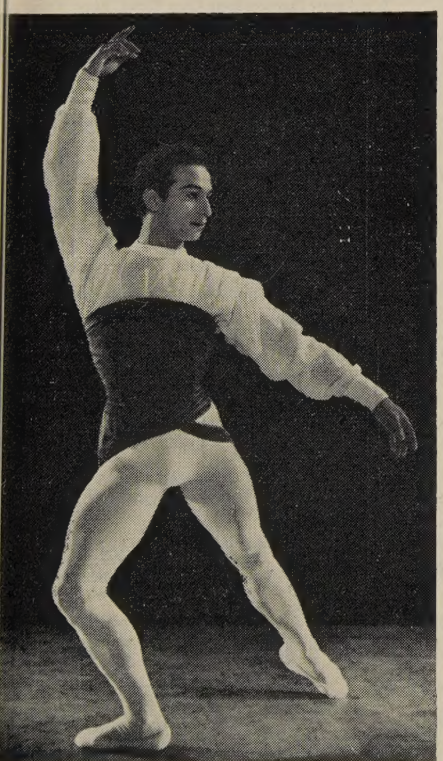
Their Most Important Date

COVENT GARDEN is still the goal of most of the world's ballet companies, even though the Opera House is also one of the most difficult theatres for ballet to succeed in. The Christmas season there of the Royal Ballet (formerly Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet) will mark the most important stage yet in the company's development, for it will be appearing in a theatre that has seen the greatest dancers and companies of this century, and it must be judged accordingly. It matters not that there has recently been a rumpus about the titling of the two companies, nor that this younger company started out on a provincial tour with a number of recently-recruited dancers; that is in the past. The company, when it was the Theatre Ballet, had a splendid record for being able to rise to an occasion; it also had one of the finest modern repertoires in British ballet. There is not the slightest doubt that this past record will help the present dancers to give of their utmost during its gruelling test. They are being helped by the fact that three creations are being given during the season—by John Cranko (*The Angels*), Kenneth MacMillan (*The Burrow*) and Peter Wright (*A Blue Rose*)—and nothing invigorates and encourages dancers more than creations.

This season obviously marks the first step in the integration of the two Royal Ballet companies, and for the benefit of the younger company, which has unfortunately had to suffer during the interim period, the quicker this integration is brought about the better. By their performances at Covent Garden, the younger Royal Ballet will prove how worthy they are of their title. The very best of luck to them!

The photographs on this page are of some of the Royal Ballet's soloists.

JOHAAR MOSAVAL
Photo: Houston Rogers



AUDREY FARRISS
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LESLIE WHITE
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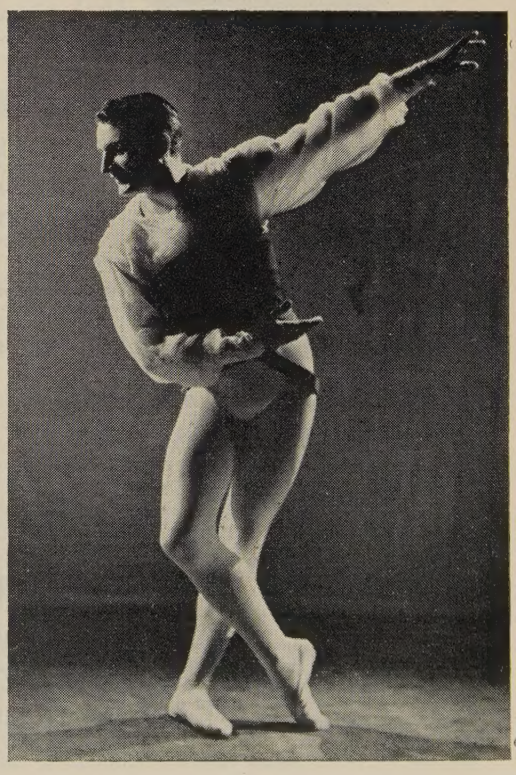

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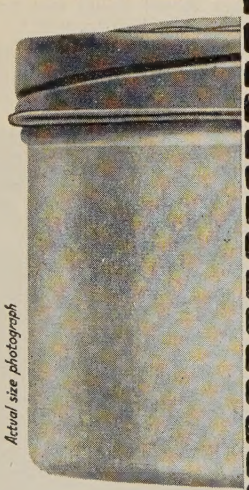

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Credits and Discredits of 1957

DANCE AND DANCERS New Year's Honours to: John Cranko and Benjamin Britten for creating the first full-length British ballet, even if everyone was not in agreement about the success of the whole. The Royal Ballet for making its fifth tour of the United States even more successful than the previous ones. Ballet Rambert for giving a season at Sadler's Wells Theatre which showed the company in finer fettle than for many years, and also for their pioneering a highly successful tour as the first Western ballet company to tour China. Festival Ballet for their triumphs across Europe and particularly in Paris, also for managing to sell-out for two months in London's Festival Hall. Alicia Markova for showing her great art, unimpaired by the years, during her guest appearances at Covent Garden. Dame Margot Fonteyn, Michael Somes, Rowena Jackson and Bryan Ashbridge for their Australian tour, and especially to Fonteyn who proved herself to be as great a diplomat as a ballerina. Nina Vyroubova for having brought great art to a number of most differing rôles, Maurice Béjart and Pierre Rhyllys for combining interesting choreography and new ideas in ballet in Béjart's own company and also for other groups. Milorad Miskovitch and Irène Lidova for Ballet 1957 de Paris, a small group which has ideas and does not rely on the standard classics. John Taras for having formed an important group of international artists, Ballet de Pâques, in Monte Carlo all within the space of a few weeks. Veteran designer Alexandre Benois for proving that new designers are not necessarily the best in his recent designs for *Petrushka* (The Royal Ballet), *Graduation Ball* and *The Nutcracker* (London's Festival Ballet). Pilar Lopez for returning to London for the fourth time with as strong a company of Spanish dancers as she has ever had. The Ximenez-Vargas company for showing, in their season at Sadler's Wells Theatre, that they have started on the right lines. John Hart for being responsible for the great improvement in the dancing of the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden.

No Honour to: Britain's impresarios who have failed to bring one single foreign classical ballet company to England during 1957. Those critics who judged a Modern Dance company, namely the José Limón Dance Company, according to the canons of the classical ballet. All those connected with ballet companies, whether as dancers or on the administrative side, who feel that performances in the provincial cities, or abroad or at matinees are unimportant.

Ballet should be grateful to: Lucia Chase who had the foresight to create Ballet Theatre Workshop and thus insure a permanent flow of new works into Ballet Theatre's repertoire. The Edinburgh Festival for launching a plan to present twelve new creations at their 1958 festival. The Festival of Aix-les-Bains for inaugurating an internationl acompetition for young choreographers. Jim Ranger for a plan to give club performances called Sunday Ballet at Sadler's Wells Theatre when young choreographers will be given a chance to create new works; the first of these performances is due to take place in March.

Ballet is not grateful to: Those organizations in Britain which once started off with such high ideals of giving a stage to choreographers and who then allowed the whole thing to peter out.

Choreography we were glad to see: Deryk Mendel's *Epithalame* which won the first prize at Aix-les-Bains. Almost all the works of Maurice Béjart, especially *Haut Voltage* and *Prometée*. The revival of Howard's *La Fête Etrange* by the Royal Ballet even if the performance was disappointing. Most of the creations by José Limón during his season at Sadler's Wells. The revival of Fokine's *Petrushka* and, in fact, nearly any of his ballets; he still remains the choreographer of almost any year.

Designers we have missed: Any work for the ballet in 1957 by Jean Hugo, Clavé, Carzou, Kenneth Rowell or Nicholas Georgiadis.

Designs we should have gladly missed: John Piper's settings for *The Prince of the Pagodas*.

Book of the Year: G. B. L. Wilson's *A Dictionary of Ballet*, which also happens to be the cheapest dance book of the year.

Muddles of the Year: The still very obscure titling of the two companies which, owing to the granting of a Royal Charter, found themselves both called the Royal Ballet. Is a choreographer to be called a *choréauteur* in future, according to Serge Lifar's dictates?

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR: Although the pas de deux *from* The Prince of the Pagodas, *in which Svetlana Beriosova and David Blair appear in this picture, was not universally accepted as a highlight in* 1957, *the individual dancing of these two Royal Ballet stars has been.*
Photo: Tony Armstrong Jones

Mysteries of the Year: Elaine Fifield's unheralded departure from the Royal Ballet just at a time when she was reaching eminence as a ballerina. Who was responsible for the clash of Spanish Ballet companies—Pilar Lopez with Ximenez-Vargas in London and Pilar Lopez with Antonio in Paris? Who was responsible for the unfortunate newspaper publicity surrounding the financial side of Margot Fonteyn's tour of Australia? How is it that a ballerina of such eminence as Yvette Chauviré—undoubtedly France's greatest living ballerina—could be allowed to terminate her contract with the Paris Opéra? How much of the Covent Garden subsidy goes to opera and how much to ballet?

Performances of the Year: Alicia Markova in *Giselle* and in *The Pas de Quatre* at the Nervi Festival. Svetlana Beriosova in *Giselle*, *The Lady and the Fool* and *Checkmate*. Nadia Nerina and David Blair in *Le Lac des Cygnes*. Toni Lander, John Gilpin and Flemming Flindt in *Etudes*. José Limón and Lucas Hoving in *Emperor Jones*. Pauline Koner in *There is a Time*. Peter Van Dijk in almost any classical variation. Nina Vyroubova in *Night Shadow* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Most Improved dancers of the Year: Pirmin Trecu, Franklin White, Ronald Hynd, Gary Burne, Doreen Wells, Shirley Grahame, Merle Park, David Drew, Graham Usher, Basil Thompson, William Wilson of the Royal Ballet (formerly Sadler's Wells Ballet). Audrey Farris, Susan Alexander, Patricia Cox, Leslie White, Margaret Lee of the Royal Ballet (formerly the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet). Ann Horn, Norman Dixon, Ian Metsis, Lucette Aldous and Patricia Dyer of Ballet Rambert. Margit Muller, Jeanette Minty, Dianne Richards, Louis Godfrey, Terry Gilbert and Peter White of London's Festival Ballet.

With Ballet Rambert Across China

Last month we published an account of the journey to China and the first days of Ballet Rambert in Peking by Frederick Bromwich (the company's manager). This month he continues the story, and it is later taken up by David Ellis (the company's Associate Director). Bromwich was only with the dancers for the first part of the tour, then he returned home and David Ellis took over.

by FREDERICK BROMWICH

Journey to Tientsin

AFTER the company had given three performances it was possible to assess the feelings of the audience. *Giselle* proved to be easily the most popular ballet. The Chinese loved the story with its display of emotion, and acclaimed Ann Horn for her highly dramatic interpretation and excellent dancing. *Coppélia* was also quite popular, although the Chinese seemed to find its plot rather childish. *Winter Night*, though a dramatic work, did not appeal so much: the audience appeared to find it too abstract, not taking to its costumes or set. *Les Sylphides* they enjoyed thoroughly, and after a sticky beginning the sly humour of *Gala Performance* won their appreciation.

How lovely is Chinese writing! Everywhere the walls are covered with messages proclaiming their loyalty to the Communist Party and President Mao. But whatever the subject, the coloured paper of every hue and the decorative writing brightens the entire pattern of Chinese life.

Tientsin is a fairly big modern industrial city. The train journey there had proved interesting and comfortable, with each passenger being given pots of tea, a wireless to listen to, and periodicals to read. On arrival in the town we attended a performance of the Tientsin Folk Dance Group, numbering 160 artists—dancers, singers and Folk Orchestra, with soloists and a Western style orchestra. The dancing gave sheer delight, and our whole company, roused to an enthusiastic pitch, clapped and cheered. This immediately put us on our mettle, for we gave a first-class performance of *Giselle* the following night.

The theatre, seating 2,700 with at least another 100 standing, was packed. Norman Dixon celebrated his return to the company by giving a very dramatic performance of Albrecht, and Ann Horn, though suffering from a bad attack of laryngitis (which was, by then, running through the company) also rose to the occasion. At the end of the performance we again had flowers given to every member of the company, not excepting myself.

The city of Tientsin supports the Folk Dance Ensemble with 180,000 yen a year: their takings are about 50,000 a year. The performers rehearse from eight to ten in the morning and two to six in the evening. When performing they don't work in the afternoons, and they give about 200 performances a year all over the province. To us the standard seemed high, but we were told that they were only considered second class.

The folk dancers invited us to watch one of their rehearsals. They were rehearsing a ballet from Indonesia which we found fascinating. The men were very virile with superb control, while the women possessed the essence of grace and charm. So impressed were we that a spontaneous request was made for a young choreographer to teach some of our dancers a new Chinese ballet. This they readily agreed to, and rehearsals started. The company found it extremely difficult, especially the movements of the hands and head. We hope, however, it will be possible to present it in England.

At every performance we had so many sightseers that only the police could clear a path for us to our bus. The company stayed in an old English hotel, originally called the "Astor," and it was strange to see the words "Dining Room" on the glass doors.

Apart from Ann Horn and Norman Dixon, who scored outstanding successes, Gillian Martlew and Lucette Aldous were also much applauded by the critics. Ian Metsis, too, gave some very good performances, particularly as Albrecht in *Giselle*. Lucette Aldous made a decided impression with the ballet fans who, much to our surprise, exist in China, too. In a department store, she and Ann Horn were nearly mobbed by excited men, women and children, gazing with wonder at these "fair-haired creatures."

It was interesting to note that the Tientsin audience claps most when the curtains close, stopping when the dancers appear. For the first time on the tour they clapped the entrance of our conductor, David Ellenberg. He became very popular with them because of his kindness and patience. The orchestra, which

GISELLE IN THE TEMPLE OF HEAVEN: One of the company's ballerinas, Ann Horn, performs an arabesque *on a terrace in Peking's famous Temple of Heaven.*
Photo: John Chesworth

FRATERNISATION: LEFT, Patricia Ashworth, June Sandbrook and Ian Metsis talking to dancers of the Soviet Novosibirsk Ballet Company who were touring China simultaneously. RIGHT, Patricia Ashworth with two dancers of the Peking Folk Dance Ensemble who gave some remarkable displays of dancing during the Rambert visit. *Photos: John Chesworth*

had started with us in Peking, had by this stage of the tour been moulded into a very good combination.

Parade and fireworks in Peking

THE weather was glorious. We visited the "Forbidden City," now a national monument and covering 7,800 square metres, but were only able to see the centre part of it. The spaciousness and massive buildings, palaces with enormous courtyards, are magnificently impressive.

Colds were running through the company, although everyone remained on their feet. The innumerable little shops soon attracted our dancers and the jade market, particularly the second-hand department, did a very brisk trade. The big department store was, however, disappointing and rather second rate. I visited the British Embassy and lunched with Mr. Morgan, a charming young man with a great knowledge and understanding of the East. The Embassy's compound is very large, and was the centre for the Boxer rebellion.

At the end of one performance an enormous banquet was given to the company, organised by five gay, smiling young girls from the Peking Opera School.

The Chinese National Day, which took place during our visit, seemed one of the greatest and most beautiful shows on earth. We took our places in the stands (which meant just what they said, "stand"), and at 8.45 the parade started, after a 21-gun-salute to President Mao. Processions of soldiers, guns, tanks and fly-past of jet fighters first, then the workers—lines of 30 or 40 people stretching the whole length of the road, which is about a quarter of a mile long. They carried armfuls of flowers and, of course, the traditional apple blossom. Then thousands of coloured balloons were released at the Great Gate, where Mao stood.

After all this the artists in brilliantly coloured costumes passed by performing beautiful movements. Ann Horn, taking colour films, could not change the film in her camera at the time they released the doves, but managed to catch the balloons. The jugglers and dancers gave a wonderful display and finally men carrying a long blue scarf (100 feet long), which represented the sea, changed into a serpent. It was a breath-taking spectacle. Over half a million people took part in this fabulous display.

The night before this parade we were present at a reception for 2,000 people in the Peking Hotel. Prime Minister Chou-en-Lai was present. We met a company of dancers from the U.S.S.R. and quickly made friends. Norman Dixon and Ann Horn told them about our production of *Giselle*. They, in turn, demonstrated their version of the Peasant *pas de deux* to Lucette Aldous and Ian Metsis. It was a marvellous scene in the great ballroom, where we mixed with a dozen different nationalities, all in their traditional costumes.

Did I say that I had had the most exciting experience of my life when viewing the march past? Well, I thought so until six o'clock the same evening, when I was informed that David Ellis, Norman Dixon, Ann Horn and myself were invited to see the fireworks, and meet Mao-tse-Tung that night.

We arrived at 7.15 and were escorted to the Great Gate. We climbed the enormous staircase opening to the sky, and 50 feet up found ourselves in a courtyard overlooking the very square where the Heads of State had stood during that morning's celebrations. Tables were arranged and the Army String Orchestra played.

On the stroke of eight a firework display started, stretching for half a mile in front of us. In the centre a cascade of fireworks played and then the great rockets shot up and burst into stars of every conceivable colour. At 8.15 we had a floor show by members of the Army Ensemble; all done on a carpet laid on the stone floor. Our hearts were continuously in our mouths for fear of someone falling. At 8.30 came another display of fireworks, even more beautiful than the last, and at 8.45 singers and dancers, again from the Army Ensemble, presented the Drum Dance, in which two sides vied with each other to beat the drums they were carrying, performing at the same time wonderful dance movements not unlike Cossack dancing.

Finally out came Chou-en-Lai himself to walk round the delegation. On arrival at our table he asked Ann Horn if she was better. What a memory! It was nearly a week since she had been ill, though still dancing. Then came Mao, and we all shook hands as he said: "Welcome." He looked tall and broad with a pleasant smile. The fireworks started again at 9.30, with still more singing and dancing.

by DAVID ELLIS

AFTER a very successful week in Tientsin, the Ballet Rambert returned to Peking on September 30 to give five performances of *Giselle* and *Coppélia*—our modern works, particularly *Winter Night* not being as popular. One of these performances was before the many foreign delegations in China in one of the Army theatres, and another was given for the 170 artists of the Soviet Novosibirsk Ballet company, which was also performing in Peking. These Russians were extremely interested in our *Giselle*, our Strand Electric equipment, and our shoes, which they plan to copy. They regarded our production as too realistic, and after their performance I think I can understand a little of what they meant.

We saw their *Shores of Happiness* (which the Stanislavsky Company had done in Paris), *Swan Lake* (also based on the Stanislavsky version) and, most interesting of all, their full-length *Don Quixote*. This proved to be a fascinating ballet with Gorsky choreography, and his work is undoubtedly the origin of both Massine's character ballets and Balanchine's abstract choreography. Having seen the second act, one can credit Balanchine's statement that all he does is to recreate from the ballets he saw in Moscow in his youth.

Two ballets filmed

Before departing for Wuhan (Hanchow) we spent 4 days making a film of excerpts from *Gala Performance* and *Les Sylphides*. The director—now filming Mao-tse-Tung's visit to Moscow—showed an immediate grasp of filming ballet, and we had none of those problems that can arise from trying to shoot a serious dance sequence through somebody's legs! The studios are not the largest in China but simply and adequately equipped with English cameras, German machinery and Hollywood lighting equipment. The scene painters proved miraculously deft and quick, repainting a whole backcloth for *Les Sylphides* from our suggestions in one and a half hours. The only odd rule was that we were allowed to smoke in the studio but not outside in the grounds—the reverse, of course, is normal Western practice.

On October 12 we left for Wuhan where we gave 5 performances, again of *Coppélia* and *Giselle*. This journey was made by train in our private sleepers and dining car. Throughout the whole trip our Chinese hosts took endless trouble over our comforts, even to the extent of having a doctor and nurse travelling with us. The nurse's main job was to cope with our exhaustion by intravenous injections of glucose. At Wuhan, I attended the opening of the first bridge across the Yangtse and

FEMALE OCCASIONS: LEFT, Gillian Martlew and Patricia Dyer resting after a walk along the Great Wall of China. RIGHT, Valerie Marsh, Gillian Martlew and Ann Horn comparing the Chinese wedding dresses which they had all bought. Photos: John Chesworth

became the first Englishman to cross this enormous structure.

Our performances were greeted with enormous enthusiasm, and here, perhaps more than anywhere else in China, we were followed in the streets, our clothing was fingered, and we were surrounded by hordes of children wherever we went. Perhaps fewer foreigners had visited this town and so the appearance of the Ballet Rambert caused more of a stir than in any other town we visited. We attended several performances of local and Peking opera and also saw their variety theatre with its fantastic acrobatics, balancing and juggling feats. Other places of interest that we visited were the local opera school, whose ballet rehearsal room we used, and the Art Academy, which is the second most important in China. The company also visited two fascinating Buddhist temples, both of which still had their complement of monks. At the opera school I gave a lecture on English ballet.

We left Wuhan for Nanking by river-boat down the Yangtse—a delightful means of travel, as no motion is felt. We stopped at various ports, disembarking at one where our mere presence as exotic foreigners was enough to hold up all the traffic.

In Nanking, we gave the same programme and performed in the Old Convention Hall of Chiang-Kai-Chek. Although not ideally suited to ballet, the acoustics were excellent, very like those of the Festival Hall. The auditorium holds 4,000 people. Again crowds had been queuing for some days and, as usual, we received many fan letters, most of them including last-hope appeals for tickets. Nanking as a town possesses very wide streets and has a slightly cosmopolitan air, having been the capital of China at various times during the last 100 years. It is surrounded by the longest city wall in China, 33 kilometres long, and outside it is a beautiful pleasure lake, on which we spent an afternoon with the local opera group. We visited the tomb of Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen and the famous Museum where Madame Sun, the director, spent two afternoons showing us round. We also witnessed our first performance of Wusi opera with the famous actress, Lau Chen, and saw the tomb of the first Ming Emperor. It was most interesting to compare the stone carvings of this period with the rather more ornate but less impressive ones on the tombs of the later Emperors, buried near Peking. While in Nanking, we were also taken to see a co-operative vegetable farm—our first excursion into peasant life.

Shanghai likes 'Gala'

On October 27 we left Nanking for Shanghai by train, where, again the same programme was played. Here audiences were perhaps a little more sophisticated than elsewhere in China, and the humour of *Gala Performance* came over best, much to Gillian Martlew's relief. We stayed in a sky-scraper hotel where, as usual, the food and service were excellent. While in Shanghai, we visited a jade factory and a studio where the arts and crafts of China are being preserved. Here we met old artists, who were passing on to their apprentices such delicate arts as the making of bird lanterns, carving of porcelain, the engraving of ink-slates and paper-cutting. I took Ann Horn, Norman Dixon, Gillian Martlew, Valerie Marsh and Carolyn Fey to an artist's studio where a group of very famous Chinese painters demonstrated for us the styles and techniques of Chinese classical painting, dedicating and giving to us their examples. We also saw the Shanghai and local Peking opera. Any odd moments we had were spent in the fantastic jade markets, where we all acquired beautiful examples of Chinese painting, porcelain, etc. Poor Patricia Ashworth had become very exhausted and we had to leave her in Shanghai to rest.

On November 3 we left for a two-day holiday in Hangchow, the "Riviera" of China —a beautiful old city on the edge of a series of lakes and surrounded by mountains. We gave one hectic performance of *Les Sylphides*,

MALE OCCASIONS: LEFT, Ian Metsis talking to a Chinese child on a collective farm which the company visited. MIDDLE, Kenneth Tillson, in a sauté, *during a game of netball with a member of the Chinese orchestra. RIGHT, Gordon Coster catches a tiny fish in the East Lake at Hankow. Photos: Chesworth*

sharing the bill with Chinese artists and our own Chinese orchestra—the curtain going up less than an hour and a half after the train arrived. Michael Reeves, our pianist, played the Rachmaninov 2nd piano concerto. In Hangchow, we spent a day on the lake, seeing many beautiful tombs and temples, as well as a silk factory, where were made some of the most beautiful embroidered silks of China. Before leaving, we saw an exhibition of chrysanthemums, the country's symbol of autumn, in sizes, shapes and colours undreamed of in the West.

China's first full-length ballet

By now, we were all very exhausted and were grateful for the two nights and a day in the train taking us back to Peking, where we were to spend a couple of days before returning to England. These days proved to be a mad rush of sight-seeing, last-minute buying and saying farewells; but they also included the cutting of our film. This very necessary step was achieved in record time after a riotous lunch given to us by the Chinese film industry. The film had not been properly synchronised to the music and Ann Horn, Gillian Martlew and I spent a nearly frantic afternoon trying to get it done before we left.

During the first evening, we saw China's first full-length ballet, based on the traditional opera movements, which was only partly successful owing, I felt, to the music, which was not really significant enough for the subject.

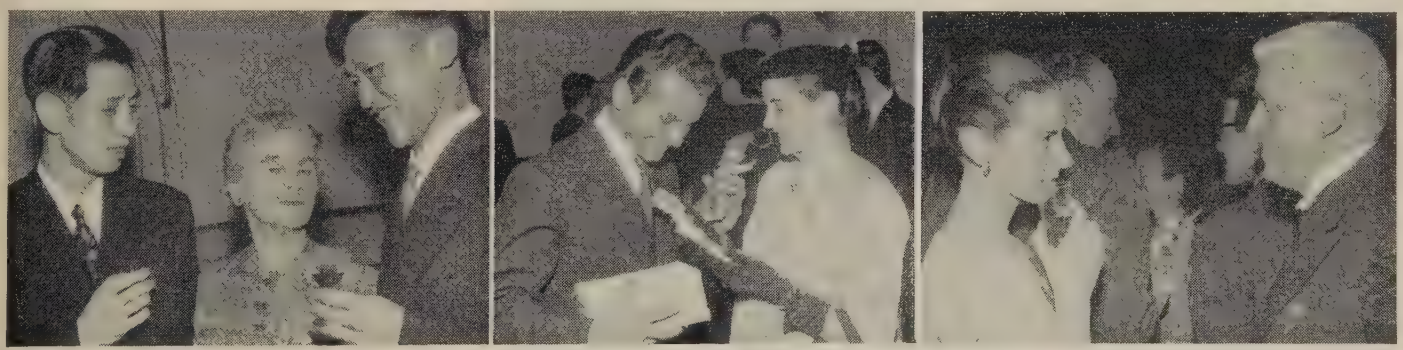
One of the two artistic directors of the company was a Russian, and this not very distinguished type of music seems rather common in Russian modern ballet. The last night, we saw a special performance of *Giselle*, given in our honour by the Novosibirsk Ballet company. Although the Chinese do not like to arrange their programmes more than a day or so in advance, this long-awaited performance had been arranged specially for us some 4 weeks previously. The ballet was in three acts—the third act being roughly the same as our second —while an additional act was made up from supposed Adam music in which Giselle and Albrecht do a series of *pas de deux* and solos culminating in their first kiss, which is observed by Hilarion. The production had something of a fairy-tale atmosphere and the costumes were not the usual peasant costumes. The lighting was similarly pretty and this may explain why they felt that our production was too realistic. Although a lot of their new choreography had a romantic feeling about it, too much of it, particularly in the double work, really belonged to the later classical period.

On our last morning in Peking, we were up at 5 a.m., to go to the airport for our customs inspection, prior to leaving by the Chinese Airlines for Irkutsk. This inspection loomed very large in our minds and there had been several meetings the previous day. The problem was that no work of art over 80 years old

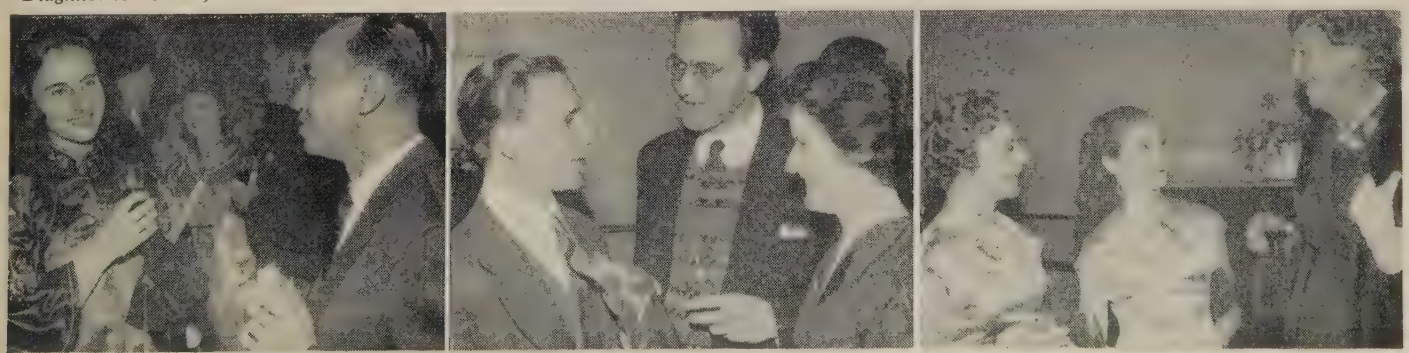
continued on page 38

PHOTOGRAPHY: LEFT, Ann Horn filming the Liberation Day parade in Peking. She is supported by Frederick Bromwich and watched by David Ellis, who are joint-authors of this article. RIGHT, The Chinese Documentary Film Unit making a film of Gala Performance *at their studios.*
Photos: John Chesworth

WELCOME HOME: Dancers and ballet celebrities at the party given for Ballet Rambert at the Mercury Theatre on November 13. LEFT, Marie Rambert between Chin Chia-Lin and Chi Ming-Tsung (both from the Chinese Embassy in London). MIDDLE, Ian Metsis presents Mary Munro, ex-Rambert ballerina, with two Chinese dolls for the child she is expecting next year. RIGHT, Ann Horn has a serious conversation with Cyril Beaumont.



LEFT, Gillian Martlew talks to Hugh Chen (B.B.C. Chinese Service). MIDDLE, Norman Dixon with Glyn Davys (writer and photographer) and Ann Cowen (Secretary of the London Ballet Circle). RIGHT, Lady Juliet Duff (daughter of the Marchioness of Ripon who was partly responsible for bringing Diaghilev to London) welcomes Thelma Litster and Elsa Recagno.
Photos: D and D



Chemin de Lumière

STARS AND CREATORS: In the picture below are Antoine Goléa, Claire Motte, Claude Bessy, Peter Van Dijk, Serge Lifar and Josette Amiel on stage after the first performance.

The picture across the top of the page shows the full stage and the impressive architectural setting by Cassandre. *Photos: Lido*

First given at the Paris Opéra on October 27. Ballet in one act by Antoine Goléa. Music by Georges Auric. Choreography by Serge Lifar. Décor and costumes by A. M. Cassandre.

Cast

The Woman in Red	CLAUDE BESSY
The Young Girl	JOSETTE AMIEL
The Woman in Yellow	CLAIRE MOTTE
The Young Man	PETER VAN DIJK
The Figure in Black	M. DUTHOIT
The Mountebank	M. BLANC
Three Men in Disguises	MM. BARI, FRANCHETTI, HERRAULT
The Little Child	MLLE. CHALAND

POSTPONED on a number of occasions, the première of this new ballet by Serge Lifar was awaited with much interest, and for various reasons, a rare event these days, this interest was not disappointed. However, one could find fault with the rather confused scenario by Antoine Goléa, which recalled without equalling that for *Les Mirages*, which Lifar, again collaborating with Cassandre as both librettist and designer, mounted at the Paris Opéra in 1947.

Here, as in that earlier work, allegorical themes are paramount, although they are developed on a smaller tragic scale.

The "chemin de lumière" is the path of light which brings a young man to pure love after he has allowed himself to be infatuated by sensual passion, to suffer the pangs of jealousy and, finally, a prey to the folly of his vices, to be tempted by the desire for death, But on the verge of this return to "nothingness" he regains possession of himself. The theme in itself offers little dramatic scope and depends essentially on the manner in which it is handled and interpreted.

Auric's intellectual and varied music, which is hardly a composite whole, seems inferior to his earlier score for *Phèdre*. If it has some striking and inventive moments, the passages of

melody are too brief and the rhythms too staccato, to make it ideal for the purposes of dance.

However, despite these initial handicaps, Serge Lifar has created a restrained and effective work of which certain passages are profoundly original. As the small *corps de ballet* only plays an episodic and subdued rôle, the ballet depends largely on the Young Man.

At one moment he withdraws from the action, at the next only to rejoin the other characters: the Woman in Red (Claude Bessy), whose *variation* utilises all the resources of acrobatics, the Woman in Yellow (Claire Motte) with her jerky staccato movements, and the Young Girl (Josette Amiel), whose movements are classical.

Yet without wishing to minimise the interest of each of these passages one must really regard the ballet's choreographic summit as a very unexpected and original male *pas de deux*. This daring conception, which has expanded the traditional *adage*, is handled with both mastery and taste bringing to the scene an unusual distinction. The poetic intervention of the Montebank, carrying at arms' length the Little Child, must also be mentioned.

Peter Van Dijk at the head of the cast was completely outstanding: his dramatic warmth and clean technique, together with his sensitivity and musicality, are rarely equalled today. In a more episodic rôle Claude Bessy brought a sensuous beauty and magnificent authority to her rather daring variation. Although badly served by an unattractive make-up, Claire Motte also gave a sensitive performance, in which technical mastery was accompanied by an intelligent use of the stage. Eclipsed by her brilliant colleagues, Josette Amiel gave a pleasant and graceful performance, but she possessed none of the poetic radiance necessary for such a rôle, which naturally suggests the use of a Chauviré or Vyroubova. Finally, Duthoit made an impression in the rôle of Death, as did Blanc as the Montebank accompanied by the Little Child, Chaland.

As a background for the action Cassandre has devised a mysterious architectural décor: the façades of classical palaces decked with still draperies and bathed in moonlight. His subtle use of perspective helps to create a dream-like atmosphere. Created in soft tones of blues and greys, the brilliant reds and harsh yellows of some of the noble and elegant costumes occasionally burst against this background. The costumes of the Young Man and Death, in which supple white cords have been used, are very well conceived, although that for Folly is of debatable merit.

Despite the few reservations I have made, this ballet can take its place among the very best created at the Opéra in recent years.

Marie-Françoise Christout

News from the Opera

OWING to the strike the first performance of *La Dame à la Licorne* was postponed. For the future a special evening in homage to Maurice Ravel is being planned for which Lander will produce *La Valse* with Daydé and Renault. A new version of *Daphnis and Chloe* will be mounted by Lifar, with a décor by Chagall, and Bessy and Algaroff in the principal rôles. Lifar is also working on a new version of *Le Lac des Cygnes* in three acts.

Owing to a disagreement with the direction, Yvette Chauviré has left the Paris Opéra. Her vast public, both in France and abroad, hope that her absence is only temporary as she is, without question, France's *prima ballerina assoluta.*

SENSUAL AND PURE LOVE: Top right. Bessy, as the Woman in Red, in an interesting group with Van Dijk as the Young Man. Bottom right. Peter Van Dijk in a pas de deux *with Josette Amiel as the Young Girl.*

Photos: Lido

Three Creations in Copenhagen

Reviewed by BENT SCHONBERG
Photographed by MYDTSKOV

VISION: *Lizzie Rohde as the Night in Niels Bjorn Larsen's ballet based on Hans Andersen's* The Story of a Mother.

Vision

(The Story of a Mother)

First given by the Royal Danish Ballet at the Royal Theatre, Copenhagen, on October 12, 1957. Ballet by Elvi Henriksen based on a story by Hans Andersen. Choreography and staging by Niels Bjorn Larsen. Music by Benjamin Britten (*Variations on a theme of Frank Bridge*). Designed by Elvi Henriksen and Niels Bjorn Larsen.

Cast

The Mother	MONA VANGSAA
Death	OLE SUHR
The Boy	PETER SCHAUFUSS
Night	LIZZIE ROHDE

OUR own great story-teller, H. C. Andersen, provides an almost inexhaustible supply of themes for ballet both in this country and abroad. Larsen's version of *The Story of a Mother* includes the main points in the story, but is unfortunately rather too brief. The work reaches its highest dramatic moment in the scene when the mother sacrifices her eyes.

Larsen's choreography, in the main, does not show any particular invention, but this is principally due to Britten's music. It is the score which has possibly been most used by contemporary choreographers and in England alone it has provided music for works by creators no less than Frederick Ashton, John Cranko and Kenneth MacMillan. In America also, several choreographers have used it. Unfortunately the lighter aspects in the score hardly accorded with the sombre nature of Andersen's story. The well-known pianist, Elvi Henriksen, who is also the wife of Niels Bjorn Larsen, originally thought of composing the music herself. Although she has no pretensions of being a composer in the same class as Britten, it is possible that had she been responsible for the score a greater understanding might have existed between it and the theme.

Outstanding were Mona Vangsaa, in the principal part of the Mother, and also a most gifted young character dancer, Lizzie Rohde, in the rôle of Night. Elvi Henriksen's décor was extremely well done, and the staging was most effective.

Gaiety

First given by the Royal Danish Ballet at the Royal Theatre, Copenhagen, on October 12, 1957. Choreography by Fredbjorn Bjornsson. Music by Johan Halvorsen (*Bergensiana Suite*). Designed by Bjorn Wiinblad.

Cast

Kirsten Ralov	RUTH ANDERSEN
Inge Sand	
Stanley Williams	OLE FATUM
	FREDBJORN BJORNSSON

(*Note: The Danish title of this ballet is* Skælmerier *which is almost impossible to translate into English. It could mean joy, mirth, or even humoresque. In consultation with English people in Copenhagen, I still cannot arrive at any conclusion. Literally the word implies the amusing things which entertain young people*).

THIS, Fredbjorn Bjornsson's second ballet, was originally created for the group of dancers from our Royal Ballet who toured in America last summer. In his new work he seems to have been largely inspired by American choreographers, and the result is simple and pleasant. There is no plot, just young people enjoying themselves and their pleasure in their dancing is infectious, so that we, the audience, enjoy it equally. Unfortunately, there is, however, a great deal of parody of dance and ballet and the choreographer sometimes makes fun of his own art—such as making the audience laugh at a dancer who forgets his own steps. This kind of thing can only be achieved by someone who is the master of his own art and even then has to be done with great taste, moderation and a sense of theatre. Massine once brought it of with his Felicita, the bad pupil, in *Scuola di Ballo*, and then it was danced brilliantly by Delarova. In the hands of less accomplished artists such parody can bring ballet into decadence.

VISION: *Mona Vangsaa as the Mother, the principle rôle, in Larsen's ballet.*

Compared to Bjornsson's first choreographic work, *Behind the Curtain*, he has developed to a far greater extent than one would have thought possible. Despite a certain tastelessness he nevertheless shows that with the inspiration by witty music he can create attractive choreography. If the improvement shown here is any test of the way he can develop, then his next work should prove to be most interesting.

Fever

First given by the Royal Danish Ballet at the Royal Theatre, Copenhagen, on October 18, 1957. Ballet in one act by Frank Schaufuss based on a synopsis by H. R. Krogsgaard (medical adviser to the Royal Danish Ballet), and E. Lindhard. Choreography and production by Frank Schaufuss. Music by Ole Schmidt. Designed by Henrik Bloch.

Cast

The Fever — NIELS KEHLET
Death — KJELD NOACK
Corps de Ballet of *Red and White Corpuscles* and *Units of Penicillin.*

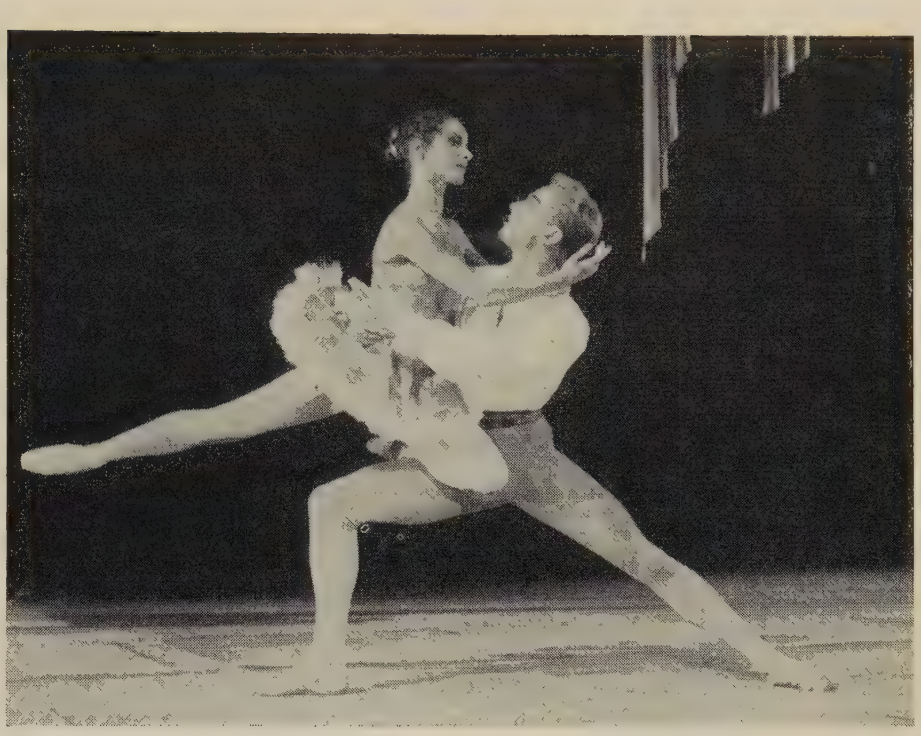
THE action takes place in the human body with its red and white corpuscles. The Fever arrives accompanied by Death, but the Units of Penicillin defeat them and the man survives.

Frankly the subject could hardly be more unpleasant, and it is difficult to understand how such a theme was accepted by the Royal Theatre. Anyone seeing it without the aid of a programme would not have the faintest idea as to what it is all about. The ballet shows neither new trends nor the re-creation of old ones and would seem to have been mainly inspired by pre-Hitler German choreography.

Yet it would be unjust to mention only the ballet's very obvious faults. When compared to Schaufuss' first essay in choreography, *Idolon*, it shows very great progress. He has now learnt how to use his *corps de ballet*, and all through he shows a great theatrical sense and an ability to make the best use of the technique of the dancers. Many of his dances and *ensembles* are very well constructed, and the dancers themselves realised this in all their work. Quite outstanding was young Niels Kehlet, as the Fever, who danced really marvellously and proved himself to be one of the most promising and virile young dancers in the company.

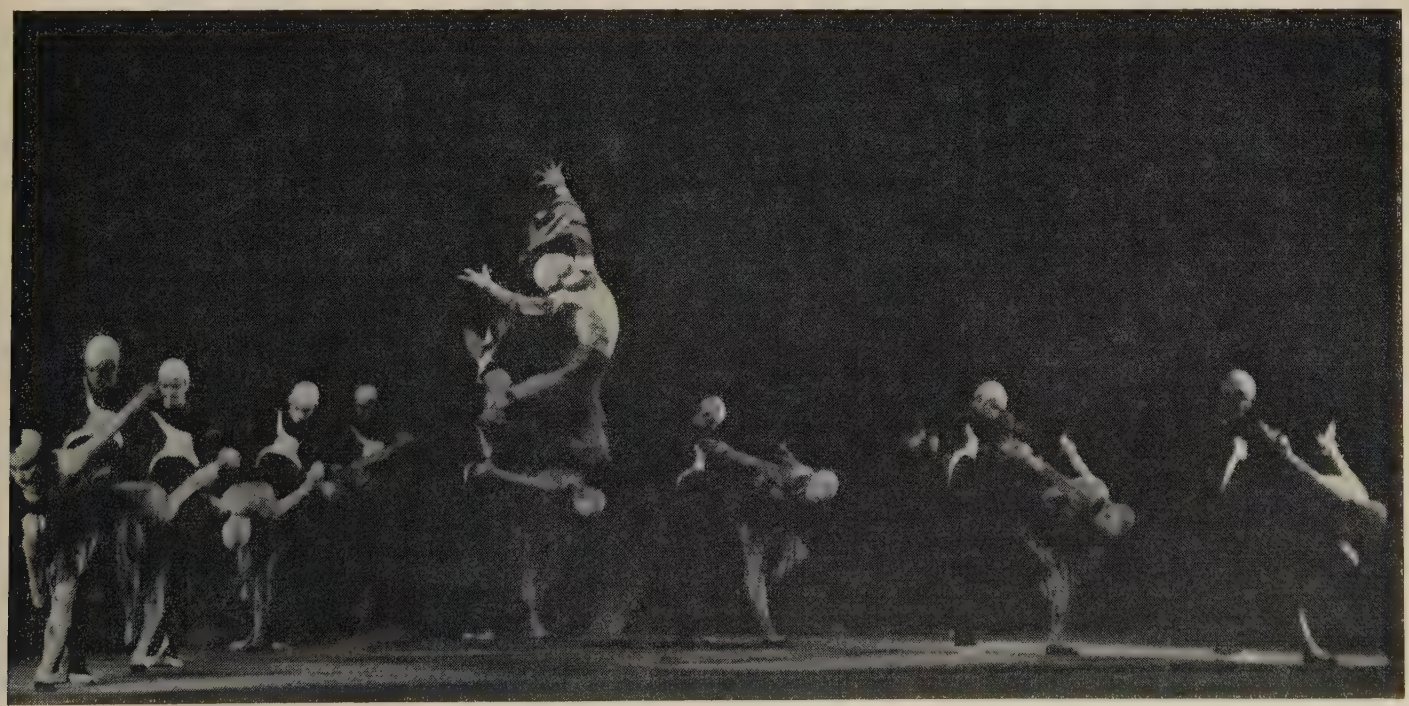
The décor and especially the costumes for some bald-headed girls seemed rather *démodé*, but the music of Ole Schmidt created great impact. In an impressionistic way it pulsated like blood pumping through the body, and in the first part it was particularly good ballet music.

The net result of these three new ballets is, in the main, disappointing. But as in Denmark we have no Ballet Workshop organisation comparable to other countries, it is hard to see how choreographers can reach perfection without a laboratory. The most heartening result of these new creations is that Bjornsson and Schaufuss have shown considerable development, and that they have both learnt from the faults and criticisms of their earlier ballets. We look forward to seeing how much they improve with their next works.



GAIETY: *Ruth Andersen and Ole Fatum in a* pas de deux *from Fredbjorn Bjornsson's recent ballet.*

FEVER: *Niels Kehlet, jumping centre, as the Fever in Frank Schaufuss' new work. In this ballet, Kehlet literally jumped to the fore as a most promising dancer for the future.*



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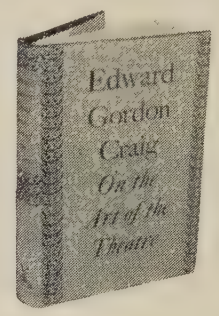

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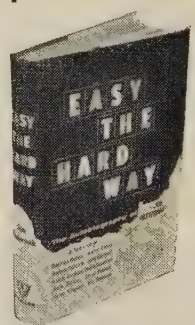

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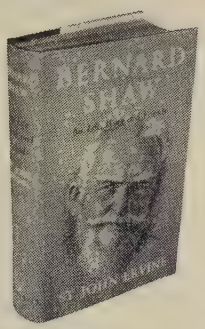

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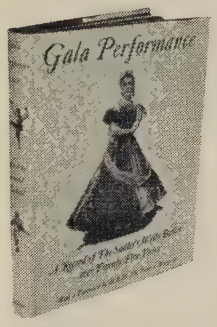

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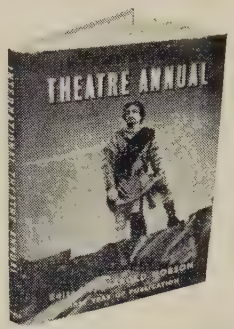

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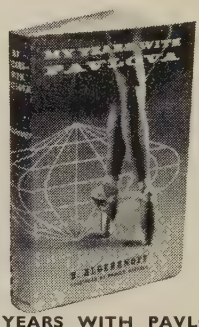

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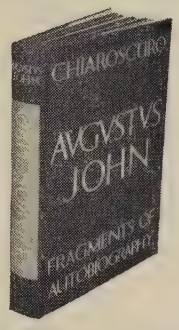

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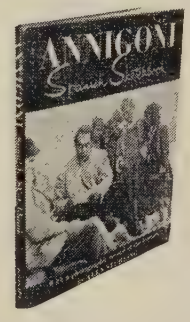

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Ballet Perspectives: 3

La Fête Etrange

The background and story of the creation of one of the most notable ballets in the British repertoire.

by CLIVE BARNES

THE CREATORS (left): Frank Staff as Julien, David Paltenghi as the Young Nobleman and Maude Lloyd as the Young Châtelaine in the first production of La Fête Etrange *in* 1940.

ALTHOUGH the war years were enormously important to British ballet, marking its expansion and general acceptance by the public, for obvious reasons it was a period of comparatively slight artistic significance. Out of the twenty-seven ballets produced by the major companies during the war, only two—*La Fête Etrange* and *Simple Symphony*—have been given during the past few years. Possibly this neglect is in a few instances unjust, and Ashton's *The Wise Virgins* and *The Wanderer* spring to mind as cases in point, but by and large the situation is a fair reflection on the wartime period of creative stagnation.

Curiously enough the sole ballet masterpiece produced in England during the war was first given not by one of the large organisations, but by that small, yet immensely influential company, the London Ballet. This modest group was founded at the end of 1938 by Antony Tudor. Even though it gave a very few performances during that uneasy year of Munich, its creative achievements far outran the size and scope of its activities. These were brought to a close by the outbreak of war, and Tudor, together with his principal male dancer Hugh Laing, seeing no future for themselves in British ballet, accepted the invitation, which had been extended to them by Richard Pleasant earlier that summer, to become inaugural members of Lucia Chase's Ballet Theatre in New York.

In the absence of Tudor and Laing, originally intended to be of only temporary duration, the London Ballet's group of dancers found itself for the time being without a leader. Consequently when Harold Rubin approached the company with his idea for making the Arts Theatre a central London home for ballet, there was no one with whom he could negotiate. He spoke to Peggy Van Praagh, one of the company's leading dancers, who at that time had taken over the West Street studio of Margaret Craske, the well-known Cecchetti teacher who had also left England to join Ballet Theatre.

Having obtained Tudor's permission from New York for the company to recommence operations, Peggy Van Praagh, together with fellow-dancer Maude Lloyd, arranged with Rubin for the London Ballet to open a season at the Arts Theatre; so on November 30, 1939, the company began at this tiny central London theatre club the second fruitful phase of its career.

In its pre-war guise it had only presented performances at the East End's Toynbee Hall once a fortnight; appearing every night at the Arts made the enlargement of its limited repertory a prime necessity. Among the choreographers from whom ballets were commissioned was Andrée Howard, and it was in this way that *La Fête Etrange* first saw light of day.

The ballet's inspiration came from Ronald Crichton. As early as 1938 Crichton had had the idea of basing a ballet upon an episode in Henri Alain-Fournier's novel *Le Grand Meaulnes*. At the same time he also considered the possibility of a ballet set to Fauré piano pieces. Eventually these two separate conceptions came together in his mind, and the germ of *La Fête Etrange* was born. He toyed with the idea for a while, and discussed the matter with his friend Sophie Fedorovitch—as indeed most people did in those days. Fedorovitch was delighted with the project, but for various reasons it hung fire.

Among the others of the English contingent —which included Markova and Dolin—who assisted in the formation of New York Ballet Theatre was the choreographer, Andrée Howard. After reviving her *Death and the Maiden* and *Lady into Fox* for the American company, Howard returned to England in the middle of 1940, slightly disillusioned by her experience. On being commissioned by the London Ballet for a new work she talked it over with Fedorovitch. Fedorovitch contacted Crichton, and the collaboration between the three was started.

In a sense it might be said that Crichton's final scenario for the ballet owes little more to its source than its inspiration and atmosphere. Alain-Fournier was a French writer killed in the First World War at the tragically early age of 28. His solitary novel, *Le Grand Meaulnes*, is both an evocation of adolescence and, in a sense, an allegory on the transient nature of happiness.

The fantastic, yet strangely realistic, story tells of Augustin Meaulnes and the three lives that are inextricably interwoven with his—Yvonne de Galais and her brother Frantz, and Frantz's fiancée Valentine Blondeau. The ballet is based on the episode in the novel that is itself called "La Fête Etrange." Meaulnes running away from home stumbles across an old château. Here curious arrangements are being made for the wedding reception of the young master of the house, Frantz de Galais. By an eccentric whim Frantz has arranged for his bride to be greeted on her arrival at his home by a fancy dress party, made up of children and old people.

The guests are at the house awaiting Frantz's return with Valentine, his new bride. Meaulnes mingles with them, and falls in love with

WARTIME PRODUCTION: The cast of the first production at the Arts Theatre included: Paltenghi (left); H. Legerton, T. Langfeld, P. Clayden, M. Boam (on stairs); S. Hayden, D. Dering, C. Bidmead, E. Hamilton, S. Reeves (across back); A. Kelly, E. Schooling (right); Staff and Lloyd (centre).

Frantz's sister, Yvonne. Frantz eventually returns alone—Valentine has not married him—and the party breaks up in confusion. Meaulnes leaves, his young life transfigured by the strange experience of his "great adventure." The rest of the novel, with its complicated unravelling of the lives of its four principal characters, does not directly concern the ballet, although it may be said that the ballet is extraordinarily successful in catching the atmosphere of the entire work.

Even the actual episode Crichton has taken for his ballet, he has drastically amended. Yet despite these changes he has been true to the heart of the novel. There are three principal characters in the ballet. On the work's first production these were called: Julien, a country boy; The Young Châtelaine; and The Young Nobleman. When *La Fête Etrange* was subsequently revived by the Royal Ballet the names of the characters were made a little more specific by calling them: A Country Boy; The Bride; and The Bridegroom.

The action of the ballet can be interpreted in a number of different ways, and is by no means the straightforward narrative ballet that most writers in giving their own versions have tried to suggest.

What the audience sees is simple enough. A young boy enters and becomes caught up in the preparations for a party. He meets a beautiful girl and some lightly-defined emotional attachment is immediately set up between them. A handsome young man is seen hastening across the stage. The scene changes slightly by the raising of a half-draped curtain. The mysterious party is now in progress. The boy and the girl dance together. The handsome young man—with whom the girl clearly has a close relationship which once again is not precisely specified—enters. He notices the emotional tension between the boy and the girl. The thread of his own feelings for the girl immediately snaps. The girl is torn between the emotions of the two men. All three dance together in a curiously separate manner. The young man stalks off. The girl enters the house alone, and the party breaks up. The boy is left by himself—wondering.

The reticent understatement of these events enables them to be understood in varying ways. Indeed the ballet's "story" tends to change slightly with differing portrayals of the principal rôles, each of which lends itself to an individul interpretation.

What the action does make clear is that each of the characters undergoes an emotional change during the course of the ballet, and is, in a sense, disillusioned. If the "new" names given to the characters in the Royal Ballet's 1947 revival are taken at face value, and it is accepted that the girl and the haughty young man are in fact married, it appears that the Bridegroom loses faith in his Bride, and his confidence crumbles; the Bride is sad, perhaps at her husband's mistrust, perhaps at the realisation of the limitations of her marriage; while the Country Boy touches love for the first time, and it falls to ashes in his adolescent hands.

Yet the actual happenings really remain flexible, and the ballet deserves the Shakespearean sub-title: "Or what you will." In discussing his work for the purpose of this article, I suggested to Crichton that if the original names of the characters are accepted, it is by no means apparent that the young nobleman and the châtelaine are married, and it is possible to think of them as brother and sister, so relating the ballet quite closely to the incident in the original novel. Although such a reading was not Crichton's intention, he readily agreed that it could be a valid interpretation not at odds with the stage action.

Crichton, of course, was not only responsible for the ballet's theme; he also chose the Fauré piano music to which it is set. Although the output of Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924) was considerable, in this country interest in his music has concentrated to such an extent on his famous *Ballade*, the *Requiem* and a handful of songs, that it could have been no great task for Crichton to select a number of comparatively unfamiliar pieces. Yet he seems to have gone out of his way to find unhackneyed examples. He uses, for instance, two of the nine *Préludes* from the wonderful but little-known Op. 103. Most of the music, which has been chosen and matched together with tact and taste, is taken from the composer's middle and last periods.

FETE *AT THE WELLS: When the ballet was revived for the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet in* 1947, *Anthony Burke played the Bridegroom, June Brae the Bride and Donald Britton the Country Boy. Photo: Mandinian*

The score consists of *Nocturne* No. 7 in C sharp minor (1898); *Impromptu* No. 2 in F minor (1883); the third piece from his piano duet *Dolly*, called *Le Jardin de Dolly* (1893–96); *Barcarolle* No. 5 in F sharp minor (*c.* 1895); *Prélude* No. 5 in D minor; *Prélude* No. 8 in C minor (1910–11); and *Nocturne* No. 6 in D flat (c. 1894).

To these piano pieces Crichton added two of Fauré's songs: the first of the so-called "Venice" songs, *Mandoline* (in G, 1890) with words by Paul Verlaine; and *Soir* (in D flat—published 1900, but probably composed earlier) with words by Albert Samain. It is a popular misconception that songs do not make good ballet music, whereas, in fact, nothing could be further from the truth. In *La Fête Etrange* Crichton uses the songs to vary the somewhat even impressionist texture of Fauré's piano music, while at the same time maintaining the mood, and also to add literary images to the general atmosphere. Samain's *Soir*, with its "Le ciel, où la fin du jour se subtilise, Prolonge une agonie exquise de couleurs," is particularly apposite.

One possible flaw discernible in the relationship between the music and choreography is that the musical climax comes with the stormy *Barcarolle* (which Alfred Cortot once described as "the sea, and the bold, free passion of an Antony and Cleopatra which these powerful rhythms awaken"), while the choreographic climax is held back and matched against the quieter beauties of the final *Nocturne*. Yet for myself I find this contrast between music and action effective.

For the first production the music was provided by piano and singer—although occasionally, sad to say, the singer was omitted. When the ballet was first revived by the Royal Ballet at Sadler's Wells, it proved necessary to have the score orchestrated. This was undertaken in the first instance by Lennox Berkeley. For a number of reasons, among them, no doubt, the difficulties it posed the players, Berkeley's sensitive orchestration was subsequently abandoned for a competent but decidedly less delicate version by Guy Warrack. This second orchestration changed some of Fauré's key signatures.

Sophie Fedorovitch, who had acted as the intermediary between Crichton and Howard, naturally took responsibility for the décor and costumes. Her designs for this ballet rank with her first version of Ashton's *Nocturne* as the most memorable work she did for narrative ballet. Like her fellow-collaborators she succeeded in transposing the atmosphere of the novel into the theatre.

Fournier set the scene for his hero's "great adventure" with painstaking precision. The minor points of detail—the cold, frosty air, the misty, formal gardens of the mysterious château—are all suggested by Fedorovitch's designs. In the book, among the guests at the party are a group of strolling players, the *bohémiens*. Fedorovitch seized upon this hint, and introduced Harlequin figures into the ballet. These not only add immensely to the air of unreality that must pervade the scene, but the bright colours of their Picasso-inspired costumes give just the right contrast to set off the dull-toned greys, pinks and blues of the other dancers, and add life to the crepuscular setting.

Andrée Howard has produced many ballets, both before and since *La Fête Etrange*, yet this is her one great masterwork. Most of her best work has been with purely literary subjects, and she is the only choreographer I can think of who has successfully translated novels into terms of ballet.

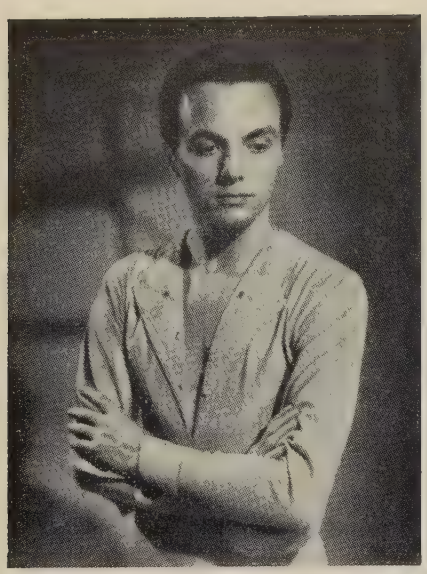
The unity found in all the elements of *La Fête Etrange* is so perfect that the contribution of each part to the whole can easily be underestimated. Cyril Beaumont, in his generally shrewd appraisal of the work in his *Supplement to the Complete Book of Ballets*, has suggested that: "the ballet contains so little action and variety that it nearly approaches monotony. It may be, however, that the choreographer has deliberately subordinated all movement to the exigencies of mood." While obviously the evocation of atmosphere has been Howard's

continued on page 33

Britain's Great Virtuoso

by JOHN PERCIVAL

The photographs used with this article are reproduced from *John Gilpin* (Dancers of Today series, published by A. & C. Black).



JOHN GILPIN: A recent study in the costume he wears in Harald Lander's Etudes. *In this rôle Gilpin brought great acclaim to Festival Ballet in their recent European tour which took them from Norway to Italy via Paris.*
Photo: Mydtskov

JOHN GILPIN, swift and elegant, is a classical dancer of the very first rank. In those romantic leading rôles which demand no subtle characterisation or dramatic talent but derive their interest mainly from the skill and style of the dancing, he has few rivals in the Western world today. Think of his Prince in *The Nutcracker*. Who dances more lightly or more crisply than Gilpin in the Snowflakes scene? Who spins and leaps with more zest and speed in the last act *divertissement*? Certainly no other dancer has the deportment of Gilpin in this rôle: his upright bearing and radiant smile, his courteous attentiveness to little Clara, the deference he shows to his partner.

In its essential qualities, Gilpin's dancing has not changed at all since he began his career some twelve years ago with Ballet Rambert. Then, as now, it was always fleet, confident and distinguished. The boyish dash of his variations in the *Giselle pas de deux* remains such a vivid memory that it is difficult to believe a decade has passed since we last saw him dance them. There are many rôles he danced then in which he has never since been surpassed; the French ballerina's cavalier, for instance, in Tudor's *Gala Performance*, or the thigh-slapping boy with the roving eye in Gore's *Plaisance*.

From the very first, Gilpin was always—and quite obviously—a "star" dancer. He has never had to work his way through a *corps de ballet*, but it is difficult to believe that his talent could, in any case, have gone unnoticed for long. His good looks, attractive personality, and winning charm have always marked him out just as much as his sure technique and excellent line, and it is the combination of these qualities which has made him, in his twenties, one of the biggest stars in British ballet.

Not to his best advantage

Unfortunately, his talents have not always been shown to best advantage in the many rôles created for him. Paradoxically, it is largely because of his outstanding talent that this is so. Confronted with a dancer who will tackle even the most fiendishly difficult parts with such a flourish, some choreographers have succumbed to the temptation to conceal their own lack of inventiveness by exploiting his technique to the limit. Far too often the result has been merely flashy. One of the honourable exceptions is in *Symphony for Fun*, in which Michael Charnley created a rôle to reveal the control and fluency as well as the bravura of Gilpin's movement, exploiting his smooth and apparently effortless slow *pirouettes*, his high leg extension and supple back, his mastery not only of speed but of variety of speed—slow motion or static poses contrasted with swift bursts of movement. The result is every bit as exciting and far more satisfying than any conventional display of technical fireworks.

The soft, flowing quality which Gilpin brings to most of his best parts is never achieved at the expense of virility. In *Les Sylphides* he shows something of the zest which Dolin used to bring to the rôle. Without neglecting the moonshine romanticism of this ballet, he does not forget that his solo is based on a mazurka, one of the most vigorous of dances.

Similarly in *Le Spectre de la Rose*, despite his exceptional fluency, his movements never lack forcefulness. The difficulties of this rôle arise from the mixture of gentleness and strength which it demands from the dancer. The spirit of a rose is essentially a fragile, delicate conception, but unless it is also unmistakably manly the whole point of the ballet is lost. Delicacy is all, but delicacy depends on strength and precision. Gilpin's unusual muscular control enables him to provide this, as, for example, when he ends a series of turns by passing directly into an *arabesque* and holds it beautifully. Gilpin's is, in consequence, perhaps the only convincing performance of this rôle to be seen recently.

Of all Gilpin's rôles, however, the most impressive is in *Etudes*. This shows the full range of his prowess. We see him first in an *ensemble*, joining with the other male soloist to support the ballerina with flamboyant gallantry and demonstrating his balance and control in slow extensions of the leg and superbly held high *arabesques*. In his first solo he is required to rotate on his own axis almost a hundred times. First some three score *pirouettes* of various kinds, single and multiple, with subtle variations of pace, not at all forced but given with an almost liquid grace; then thirty-two *fouettés* on the *demi-pointe*, tossed off with a quite nonchalant regularity of tempo and smoothness of execution.

A few moments later Gilpin is on stage again for his second solo, this time hurling himself into a series of *jetés en tournant* with breath-taking *élan*. Later again he is to be seen in one entry after another: leaping high over the reclining lines of the *corps de ballet*, soaring in a series of *cabrioles* interspersed with *tours en l'air*, or vying with the other male soloist in an exhibition of beats and leaps—all this in addition to some arduous passages of partnering.

The delight in a challenge

But the most important thing, to my mind, about Gilpin's performance in *Etudes* is not the

AGED 8: With Anne Baulkwell rehearsing for a Sunshine Matinee. Both were Spencer-Edwards' pupils in Teignmouth.

AGED 10: As a pupil at the Cone-Ripman School at Loddington Hall in Leicestershire during the war. Gilpin in a penchée arabesque.

AGED 11: With other pupils at the Cone-Ripman School to which he was awarded a scholarship. Two years later he was awarded the Adeline Genée Gold Medal.

WITH BALLET RAMBERT: The Tarantella pas de deux *from Tudor's* Soirée Musicale *with Brenda Hamlyn in* 1948. *Gilpin joined Ballet Rambert in* 1947 *and toured Australia with the company, returning to England in* 1949. *Photo: Bettina*

diversity of feats he accomplishes with equal ease but the apparent delight with which he meets each new challenge of the difficult and exhausting choreography; the smile with which he runs on, snapping his fingers, for the mazurka solo, or the grin he exchanges with his fellow-soloist during their "dance step competition" in the *finale*.

I have no idea whether Gilpin really enjoys dancing this rôle, nor does this matter. The only relevant fact is that he conveys the impression of doing so. By his own apparent pleasure he makes the dances appear delightful in themselves. This is one of the main reasons why Gilpin's dancing has given so much pleasure to the large audiences—many of them with little previous knowledge of ballet—to which Festival Ballet has played in this country and abroad. There are probably less than half a dozen British male dancers whose names mean anything to the general theatre-going public, but Gilpin's is certainly one of them.

Responsibilities at the top

Eminence of this kind brings its own responsibilities, and Gilpin has always proved capable of shouldering them. He was twenty when he joined Festival Ballet as second male dancer. Most of his previous experience had been gained in two small companies, those of Marie Rambert and Roland Petit, with a short period in the Marquis de Cuevas' company. At first Gilpin was a valuable supporting artist to Markova and Dolin, but soon the balance of the company changed. Markova left; Dolin had an injury and subsequently danced less and less, and Gilpin became—and has remained—the troupe's principal box-office attraction. As a result he has often had to dance taxing rôles night after night, More than once, for instance, he has had to give four performances of *Etudes* in three days, as well as appearing in other ballets on the same programmes. Inevitably, with this sort of schedule there are occasions during a long season when he is technically not at his best.

It is difficult to see how the management of Festival Ballet, working without a subsidy, could possibly avoid this situation. Certainly, too, it reflects no discredit on Gilpin himself. What is amazing is not that he falls sometimes below his own high standards but that he is so good even then. In the rôles which suit him I have never known Gilpin, however tired he might be, fail to give an honest, capable and spirited performance. For this we must thank first Gilpin's own hard work and sense of responsibility, both to his fellow-dancers and to the audience, and secondly, I suspect, the training he received from the two directors who have mainly guided his career: Marie Rambert and Anton Dolin.

Rambert has the gift of developing in young dancers a sense of stagecraft and an ability to present themselves properly. Dolin, always a showman, is equally concerned that dancing should be theatrical, should come over to an audience with verve and punch. Gilpin has learnt from both of them and has put his lessons to good use. From Dolin, too, he has acquired a skill in partnering which has enabled him to support, with equal distinction, an almost incredible number of different dancers, ranging from complete novices to several of the great ballerinas of our time.

Gilpin has, besides, the gift of never seeming ruffled by anything on stage. The first time I ever saw him as the King of the Dandies in *Le Beau Danube* (a rôle he danced with wit and gaiety for Petit) he slipped and fell flat on his bottom. Without a moment's hesitation he turned the movement into a complete backward somersault so smoothly that most of the audience must have thought it was part of the choreography. Several years later, when he was dancing the Hussar in the same ballet, his partner hurt her foot at the beginning of a *pas de deux* and he had to turn the dance, *extempore*, into a solo. Gilpin's complete self-possession, dramatically manifested on occasions like this, is in normal circumstances merely another factor in the air of ease which makes his dancing so satisfying.

Despite his ability to make a pure dancing rôle so theatrically interesting, Gilpin's most serious weakness so far is his comparative failure to develop a dramatic rôle. This is the more surprising since he made his stage début as a child actor, but "legitimate" acting and ballet acting are two different things. The reason for Gilpin's deficiency in this respect may be partly a matter of temperament and partly a lack of any spare time to work on this aspect of his dancing. There is also a physical difficulty to be overcome. Although Gilpin has a most expressive body, his handsome countenance is, by nature, serene and does not lend itself readily to conveying strong or tragic emotions. Therefore, as Siegfried in *Swan Lake*, he often appears calm when he should be disturbed, reserved when he should be ardent.

As Albrecht in *Giselle*, Gilpin has obviously tried hard to present a convincing characterisation, so far without full success. Whereas his Albrecht once looked like a rather wooden imitation of Dolin's, however, it is slowly beginning to acquire an individual life. Gilpin, for all the years he has been dancing leading rôles, is still young, and his growing maturity should continue to improve his performance in rôles of this kind.

Certainly any weakness dramatically lies only in Gilpin's acting or mime. His dancing is expressive enough and has enabled him to give character to such rôles as Charlie Ney, the agile and lively young rabbit-catching poacher in Howard's *The Sailor's Return* for Ballet Rambert, or the tremulously anxious White Rabbit in Charnley's *Alice in Wonderland* for his own company. Festival Ballet's new production of Jack Carter's *Witch Boy* (first performance at the Palace, Manchester, on November 27) in which Gilpin plays the title rôle, has given a further rare and welcome opportunity for dance characterisation of this sort.

Gilpin has been hailed, in more than one quarter, as the finest of contemporary British male dancers. Certainly a strong claim can be made for him, but the same is true, I believe, of at least two or three other dancers, and which is preferred will be largely a matter of taste. In these circumstances, to call one the greatest is begging too many questions. A Fonteyn or an Ulanova may truly be called peerless because they come so near perfection that all rivals are diminished by comparison. When we have a male dancer of that quality there will be no need to argue his merit: it will shine for all to see. John Gilpin is among the very few dancers one of whom may, one day, reach that position.

TWO STUDIES OF ETUDES: *It is in this ballet that it is possible to see the full-flowering of Gilpin as a virtuoso dancer. During the course of it he has to perform almost every spectacular step in the classical vocabulary and some character ones as well. Photos: Mydtskov*

IMPERIAL BALLERINA: A new picture of Olga Preobrajenska, St. Petersburg ballerina, who recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of her arrival in Paris where she has been teaching ever since. Many of the dancers she has taught took part in a recent gala in her honour. *Photo: Lido*

DE BASIL BALLERINA: Irena Baronova, being presented with a bouquet by Jane Howe, when she was recently guest of honour at a social given by London's Festival Ballet Club. This much-beloved ballerina, now retired, spoke to the club of her past associations with Anton Dolin and her interest in the company he has done so much to establish.
Photo: Barry Warner

curtain up!

British student for Leningrad

SO many dancers have come to England who received their early training in Leningrad, the pre-revolutionary St. Petersburg, that I was greatly interested to hear of an English dancer going to train *there*. This honour has fallen to 17-year-old Anna Wooster, who has recently been training at the Nina Hubbard School in Cambridge. Anna has been accepted into the Choreographic School in Leningrad until the end of the scholastic year.

Nina Hubbard tells me she herself received her initial training from a Maryinsky dancer of the Imperial Ballet School in St. Petersburg, which is now the Choreographic School of Leningrad. So that Anna Wooster's visit there amounts to a homecoming from a ballet point of view. Anna left England in the middle of November, and she is going to send me her impressions of the schooling and the present life in the famous Theatre Street. It is hoped to publish them in DANCE AND DANCERS every month.

Home promotion claims Flindt

IT was bound to happen! All of us who watched the progress of Flemming Flindt with London's Festival Ballet realised that the time would come sooner or later when he would be recalled to his home company, the Royal Danish Ballet, from which he was granted leave of absence.

Recently the Danish ballet-master, Frank Schaufuss told the Direction of the Royal Theatre that it would be impossible to carry on with only one principal classical male dancer—Henning Kronstam—as, with the recent retirement of Borge Ralov, the company was left rather thin on the top on the male side. Originally Flindt would not return unless he went with Toni Lander, whom he has partnered with Festival Ballet. However, there are now so many important rôles to be filled in such ballets as *Napoli* and *Giselle* that he has changed his mind. From November 1 Flindt was appointed solodancer (the equivalent of a principal male dancer in England) in the Royal Danish Ballet, so becoming the youngest male dancer ever to reach such a position in the whole history of the Royal Theatre.

He will, however, fulfil his commitments with Festival Ballet and will give his last performances, as a member of the British company, in *The Nutcracker* during the Christmas season at Festival Hall. There is every possibility that he will return to dance as guest artist with Festival Ballet in the future as the Danish company has its annual holiday at the same time as their Festival Hall season.

Too busy to return home

EVER since last spring, when Festival Ballet brought Harald Lander home to his native Copenhagen, negotiations have been going on between him and the Royal Theatre for the re-staging of some of the ballets he originally created there. Amongst them it was hoped to recreate *Etudes* at the beginning of 1958. However, Lander's work at the Paris Opéra, where he is a ballet-master, makes it impossible to do anything in Copenhagen until at least the autumn of next year. Lander has also had offers to create ballets from a number of different sources. He tells me that his great regret is that, owing to so much work, he was unable to accept the offer from Edinburgh to stage a ballet at the 1958 Festival.

Readers will be very happy to know that his wife, Toni Lander, has had the rest which she needed and that she feels that she will soon be able to dance in the theatre again, She has just started to take classes, and hopes to return to Festival Ballet early in the new year in time for the company's season in Ireland.

Benois on the 'Third'

BALLET is so essentially a visual art that, apart from concert and record programmes of the music and occasional talks by famous dancers, there is little scope for it on sound broadcasting. However, on January 8 there is a programme which nobody interested in ballet will want to miss. It is to be given on the Third Programme and is provisionally called *Conversations with Alexandre Benois.*

The BBC tell me that Peter Ustinov, Benois' nephew and son of painter Nadia Benois, went to Paris recently to interview his uncle. Among the subjects which the great man, really the father of the Russian Ballet in Western Europe, recalled were his recollections of Diaghilev, Stravinsky, Komisarjevsky and the production of *Petrushka.* The conversation between uncle and nephew was conducted in French but for the programme Peter Ustinov will insert some explanatory passages in English. The recollections of *Petrushka* are entirely in English.

This will be the second time within a few weeks that Alexandre Benois has had direct contact with the British public, because on December 24 he was responsible for the production and the designing of Festival Ballet's new *Nutcracker* at Festival Hall.

Crash, bang, we're home!

AFTER their triumphantly successful tour of China it was unfortunate that Ballet Rambert's return home should have been marred

y a plane crash. While their Russian TU-104 jet irliner was landing at Prague it overshot the unway at about 200 m.p.h. It crossed some loughed fields and went straight through a edge, before it finally pulled up. There the ompany had to remain for about an hour xpecting the airliner to blow up at any noment. It was, therefore, a considerably haken but mercifully unhurt company which nally arrived in London a day behind chedule.

On November 13, two days after their return ome, a party was given for them in the old Mercury Theatre, which now houses the Rambert School. Most of London's dance elebrities, and many of Rambert's previous tar dancers, were there to welcome them ictures of the party will be found on page 15 f this issue). Several of the girls in the com- any wore the beautiful kimonos they had ought in China, giving the whole occasion an xotically festive air. As with nearly every arty given at the Mercury, some unusual ntertainment was provided, This time it was he colour films taken by one of the company's allerinas, Ann Horn. Amateur films can often ause hours of boredom and even embarrass- ent—but not these. The colouring looked xquisite and the spectacle of the Liberation Day parade, with thousands of bright balloons eing let off into the air was quite unforgettable.

Bristol in the lead

LAST month in this column I suggested that trade could provide invaluable assistance to he art of ballet by sponsoring new works. lmost immediately comes the heartening news hat the first step is being taken. The Western heatre Ballet is preparing four new works for s next season, and there is every possibility hat a large firm from the Bristol area, where his company has its headquarters, will sponsor ach of the creations.

The dancers of the company are managing to eep together for the rehearsal period by all aking jobs in Bristol, most of them in pan- omimes. They have proved themselves willing o make real sacrifices for the sake of their ompany and they deserve to succeed in their ne pioneering work.

Publishers with the mostest

NEVER since ballet was first thought of in Tortona in Italy in the 15th century (1489 to be exact) has any publishing firm brought out a greater number of books on ballet, and all forms of dance, than A. & C. Black. Since the war their output has been remarkable, nor have their publications all been designed for only popular sale. Many of the books, unlikely ever to appeal to the general public, have provided highly valued additions to ballet literature and the history of the dance.

Most of this has been due to the splendid work of one of the firm's directors, Cyril Swinson, who not only loves ballet but has proved on many occasions that he can also write about it. After the opening of the book exhibition at the National Book League on November 7 (reported in full on page 32), Swinson was host at a dinner party given at Brown's Hotel. Sitting between Marie Rambert and Julia Farron, I found that the table was so well arranged that it was possible to carry on a conversation with almost everybody at the table without appearing rude to my immediate neighbours. Rambert kept the conversation uproarious with descriptions of her Chinese adventures and many other subjects. Julia Farron, home early from the Royal Ballet American tour, went into eulogies about New York. Beryl Grey was excited about her forthcoming Russian tour and we all wondered if she would find herself the first ballerina rocketed to the moon. "If you get to the moon," said Arnold Haskell, "you will find that Dame Ninette de Valois has already opened up a school there." It was an evening of good food, wine and much laughter.

happy birthday to...

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Rosella Hightower	De Cuevas Grand Ballet	30
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SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY: Julian Braunsweg, centre, being handed a birthday cake by Benn Toff at the party given for him by Festival Ballet, which he directs, on stage after the performance at Birmingham's Alexandra Theatre on November 15. Behind him is Eileen Baker, the company's ballet mistress, and on the right is Mrs. Braunsweg. *Photo: Mike Davis*

Dancer of Today

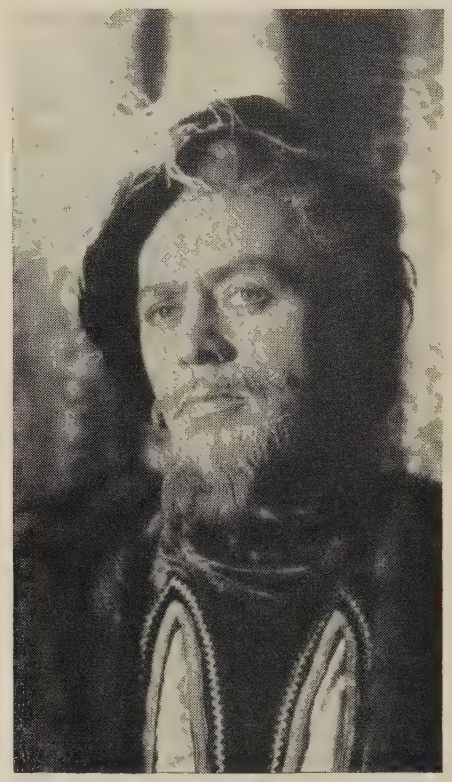


Photo: Mike Davis

PETER WHITE

BORN in Birmingham, where his mother had a dancing school. His stage career was interrupted by 2½ years in the Navy, but during much of this time he worked in a naval revue. On his demobilisation he continued with his ballet studies, and joined Mona Inglesby's International Ballet in 1947, *remaining with this company until* 1950. *That same year he became one of the original members of London's Festival Ballet, and has remained with this company ever since.*

Rôles: with International Ballet included Prince in full-length Swan Lake*; Baron in* Gaîté Parisienne*; with Festival Ballet: Prince in* Swan Lake, Act 2*; Duke of Courland in* Giselle*; Councillor in* The Nutcracker*; Burgomaster in* Coppélia*; Innkeeper in* Esmeralda*; Chief Coachman in* Petrushka*; Shah Shahrya in* Schéhérazade*; King of Hearts in* Alice in Wonderland*; General in* Graduation Ball.

ALTHOUGH Peter White was never a strong classical dancer, he has always had a good presence and been a reliable partner. These qualities steered him safely through the full-length *Swan Lake* during his days with International Ballet, and enabled him to give a creditable performance in the 2nd Act of the same ballet, partnering Anna Cheselka in the first year of Festival Ballet.

But his size and impressive bearing have automatically led him to concentrate on the all-important mime rôles in the repertory. Always a useful member of the company, it is, however, only in recent years that he has had the experience to give his parts distinction. His General in *Graduation Ball* proved a genuine creation, and showed that he is now developing into the type of mature artist that English ballet still badly needs.

So You Want to Dance?

A SHORT GUIDE TO THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCING

THREE years ago Dame Margot Fonteyn became the Royal Academy of Dancing's second President, succeeding Dame Adeline Genée. Since it was founded in 1920 as the Association of Operatic Dancing, the R.A.D.'s life has been one of distinctly rapid growth. Today 55,000 children throughout the world take its examinations annually, but its important position in the world of ballet in this country is sometimes taken for granted, and its achievements even deliberately ignored.

It does not win headlines in the popular press. An exception to this was its recent publicity over the matter of municipal ratings. The North-West London Valuation Panel decided that ballet was not a fine art and, therefore, under the 1843 Scientific Societies Act, the Academy's new premises could not be exempted from rates. Another source of publicity has been the ballet classes the Academy has arranged for athletes. In 1956, the Academy was approached by the Whip and Carrot Club, a hurdlers' and high-jumpers' association. The special classes which Andrew Hardie has devised have already gained such excellent results, particularly with regard to co-ordination and rhythm, that a further course is being held at present.

But the function of the Academy is mainly an educational one. Consequently its achievements depend on patience and careful long-term planning, and are in no sense the spectacular rewards for taking chances. Moreover, although it has grown in strength and authority, it has been continually overshadowed by the parallel and more sensational growth of our Royal Ballet.

In fact, it is not untrue to say that in some ways the work of the R.A.D. is better known overseas than in England. Possibly its most conspicuous successes have been obtained abroad, for past winners of overseas scholarships have included Rowena Jackson, Elaine Fifield, Alexander Grant, Gilbert Vernon and Donald McAlpine.

Here are some of the landmarks in its history:

1920 The standard of English dancing had deteriorated into one of its worst conditions in history. There was no State School nor any authoritative body such as now exists in Russia, Denmark and France, and had existed in Italy. The Association of Operatic Dancing came into being with the object of raising the standard of ballet by creating a body whose functions would to some extent correspond with the famous State-sponsored organizations of the Continent, but with its emphasis farsightedly placed on tuition rather than on performance.

There was an urgent need for a body of experts to guide teachers and young dancers in the correct technique of ballet, to protect pupil and parent from exploitation by irresponsible teachers, and to protect the child from over-demanding or too ambitious parents. It has no capital and its sole sources of income were the fees received from candidates for its examinations. Today it is operated on a financially self-supporting basis.

1923 The premises at 154 Holland Park Avenue were acquired. A matinee, at which Madame Genée returned to the stage, was given at the Gaiety Theatre.

1927 An examiner was sent to conduct examinations in South Africa. This has been repeated every second year.

1928 Queen Mary graciously consented to become Patroness.

1929 A matinee was given at the Gaiety Theatre at which *Coppélia* was staged.

1932 A visit of an English company to Copenhagen was organized. Four performances were given before the King and Queen of Denmark. The dancers included Alicia Markova, Anton Dolin, Harold Turner, Phyllis Bedells, Ninette de Valois, Ruth French, Wendy Toye, Stanley Judson and Felicity Gray.

THE PRESIDENT: Dame Margot Fonteyn, photographed informally at a party after the Royal Ballet's recent opening night in New York, who succeeded Dame Adeline Genée as President of the R.A.D.

Photo: Louis Mélancon

1933 Ballets were presented for four weeks at the London Coliseum.

1934 A Grand Council, consisting of distinguished persons who would act in an advisory capacity, was created.

1935 An examiner was sent to Australia and New Zealand for the first time.

On December 20, King George V was graciously pleased, at the Council held on that day, to approve the grant of a Charter to the "Royal Academy of Dancing." That is, after only 16 years of existence the title "Royal" was granted as an expression of approval of the Association's work, making it the first British ballet organization to receive such a privilege.

1936 The Great Seal was affixed to the Royal Charter on January 17; three days before the death of George V.

Once-a-week Pupils

THE Academy is primarily an examining body and in no way seeks to replace ballet schools. It is chiefly concerned with guiding the tuition of aspirants in the three branches of ballet—amateur, professional and teaching—and the problems of each of these sides differ considerably.

Schools and Teachers
by E. C. MASON

The amateur branch, which is known as *Ballet in Education*, is the largest. 35,000 children a year in this country and another 20,000 overseas attend its examinations. It is planned to provide a link between ballet and education for children who only dance once a week while continuing their normal schooling. It is recognised that a teacher must adopt an entirely different approach to the once-a-week child, as distinct from the intending professional. But nothing contained in the *Ballet in Education* examinations has to be unlearned if a child goes on to a professional training. The Academy is also alive to the absurdity of the situation in which in the past too much emphasis has been placed on teaching a technique which the child may never be called upon to use, and which cannot be developed in occasional lessons without strain and overwork.

The technique required and the dances taught are systematically built up from a Primary Class (commencing at 6 years) and through five Grades according to age, in each of which the child has an opportunity for dancing and self-expression.

Suggestions are given for a linking of the syllabus with general education. Through national dances, for example, dancing can be associated with the teaching of geography, history and art.

The actual syllabus opens with the following promising note to teachers: "A syllabus is a scrap of paper. It can *only* come to life by the use of imagination. The whole essence of this syllabus lies in its teaching." But what of the other two branches—the professional dancers and the teachers?

Potential Professionals

From the many who enrol for the *Ballet in Education* grades, there emerge a few who are possible professionals. Margot Fonteyn herself started with Academy grade work long before she was old enough to contemplate any stage career.

But the problem here is to see that no child of exceptional ability is prevented for financial reasons from continuing training. The Academy, therefore, assists certain students by providing special scholarships. Those awarded to students from the Commonwealth, usually around the age of 15, have already been mentioned. There are two opportunities of entry in this country. The first, made by a teacher, who must be a member of the Academy, with the consent of the parent, and secondly, the child recommended by an examiner during grade examinations. If accepted, the child is given two free lessons a week for up to five years by the Academy, in addition to lessons with his or her present teacher.

The following dancers owe their start to this type of assistance: Pamela May, John Hart, Donald Britton, Valerie Taylor, Diane Westerman, Judith Sinclair, Madeleine White, Christopher Newton, Basil Thompson and Elizabeth Seal.

Scholarships cannot be awarded to every possible professional. On a large scale the Academy has organized examinations for students training seriously with the idea of having a stage career. The three divisions are Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced, and they carry with them student membership and membership of the R.A.D. As these are executant's examinations the correctness of basic technique is a necessity. However, a student who has received the Advanced Certificate is not regarded as being a fully-equipped professional dancer, although it is considered that he or she should be beginning to perform

a limited extent. It merely means that the student has learnt the technical vocabulary.

The training of teachers

The maintenance of a high standard of tuition is the key to the future of British ballet. Upon the training of our teachers depends the safety of young pupils—for ballet incorrectly taught can do both physical damage and endanger professional standards.

For the past 10 years the Academy has offered a three-year resident or non-resident full-time Teacher Training Course. This insists on the students acquiring a knowledge not only of the arts allied to ballet, but also of voice production, teaching practice, anatomy and physiology. The course takes a generous and broad view of dance as an art, and requires far more of its candidates than the competent execution of steps. Some of the candidates may not possess the physical attributes needed for a stage career, but the course is so designed as to ensure that only those who have a "gift," a natural aptitude for teaching, shall receive the L.R.A.D. (Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Dancing), which is a guarantee that its holder is thoroughly trained, and able to take a place beside recognised teachers in other branches of the arts.

For teachers unable to attend the three-year course, there is an Advanced Teacher's Certificate. Candidates must be over the age of 23, have had at least three years' teaching experience in a responsible position during the past five years, and in addition to a practical demonstration of teaching they have to do a two-hour written paper.

A further aspect of the work of the Academy is its Production Club. Its aim is to give advanced students an opportunity of learning the background of stagecraft. Its activities include classes, lectures and performances, and many choreographers, including Robert Helpmann and Meriel Evans, have produced their first ballets under its auspices. It was also the Production Club that first showed the work of the South Africans, John Cranko and Alfred Rodrigues, to English audiences.

It will have been seen that the Academy's activities cover a wide and complicated field. While in its earliest stages it may be said to have grown by trial and error. But no organization run on a large scale and connected with the arts is without its disagreements, and it is a tribute to the members of the Academy that none of these conflicts has ever been serious enough to threaten its continual expansion.

Tribute must also be paid to such voluntary advisers as Karsavina, Idzikowski, Phyllis Bedells and Ninette de Valois, who have always given most generously of their knowledge. The Academy has always been flexible enough to consider criticisms and suggestions for improvement, particularly concerning the revision and expansion of syllabuses. Markova, Dolin and Baronova are on the existing Technical Committee, and the most recent syllabus revisions have been done in close consultation and with the support of the President, Dame Margot Fonteyn, who has, so to speak, her finger on the pulse of the organisation through all its activities.

When it is appreciated that the R.A.D. did not even exist 40 years ago, the results are all the more remarkable. To restore order from chaos, to maintain and, yes, to improve standards in a violently fluctuating profession which has never taken kindly to organization, is a very great tribute to the responsible leadership the Academy has fortunately enjoyed.

FAMOUS TEACHERS OF THE PAST: I

Cecchetti in London

by MOLLY LAKE

who was one of Cecchetti's pupils during the time he taught in London. She was a member of the Pavlova and the Markova-Dolin companies; later she formed, with her husband Travis Kemp, the Continental Ballet. Today she is teaching in Turkey.

CHANDOS HALL, Maiden Lane; an incredibly gloomy and grimy edifice, headquarters of an equally gloomy and grimy revolutionary society—red ties *rather* dirty and red flags *very* dirty vied with dust, cobwebs, mice and beetles for pride of place. No bourgeois cleanliness for Chandos Hall! But were you a bold enough spirit to venture through the cavern-like entrance and down the pitchy passage to the swing door you would find through that door, not the bearded anarchists and bombs you expected, but a class of perspiring ballet students, clutching desperately at the rickety bars, while a plump, rosy, energetic little man abused them roundly.

Whang! With unerring aim the little man's cane was hurled across the room at the offender of the moment. With a skill born of long practice the victim jumped neatly over it as it passed. Following the cane, in accents of despairing fury, came "*Vous êtes jolie belle fille mais un morceau de bois*" (Maestro Cecchetti's French was never his strong point, and his English was non-existent). The class hung its dripping head and contemplated the torn and dingy oilcloth gloomily. "A piece of wood." The dance was being turned into an affair of pieces of wood—his beloved dance turned into "wood"! It was more than his energetic and explosive temperament could bear. He sat down, rubbing his very bald head with both hands. "*Encore, mais cette fois des graces pas des disgraces.*"

Enrico Cecchetti, the inspired teacher, the friend, the warm, lovable and lively personality through whose skilled hands so many great dancers had passed, was the direct teaching descendant of those fabulous names of the 18th and 19th centuries, Noverre, Blasis and Lepri. He brought to the 20th century an unrivalled store of priceless knowledge which, to our shame, is now hardly used. The teachings of Cecchetti are, I think, falling into disuse and misrepresentation largely owing to the present-day stress being laid almost entirely on his syllabus and not on the basic truths behind that syllabus. The complete syllabus was a lovely thing, which arose from the deep knowledge of an inspired teacher in whose hands it had a pliability, a warmth and a vitality which was the genius of that particular teacher. Now standardised and transmitted to paper, the details have assumed too vast a proportion of the whole. Admirable though the effort to preserve the letter of his teaching has been, the spirit and quality of it are largely disappearing. These precious things must not vanish; the present-day dancer is so sadly in need of them.

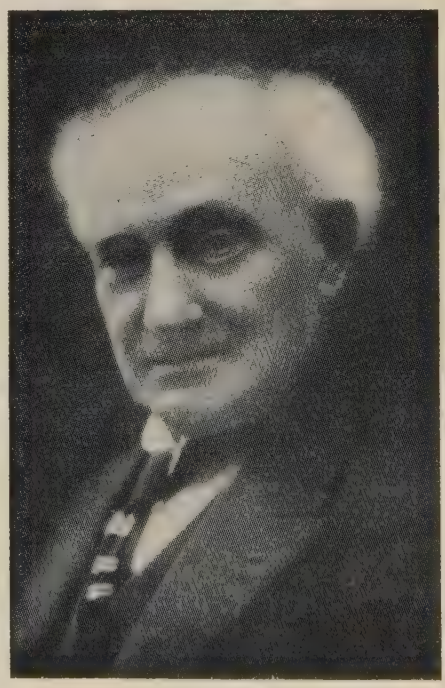
It is admirable to have the right sort of body, to be the right height and have long, elegant legs, beautiful feet and strong pointes (even if the blocks now required are most unpoetically heavy), but it is not enough to have only these things if vitality and dance quality—the keys to the magic world of ballet—are missing. Must we replace dance quality with a wearisome limp pseudo-lyricism, or an equally pseudo "grand manner"? Cecchetti gave the ability to attack when necessary; he knew so well that there can be no dance without vitality, be it the inner smile of *Les Sylphides* or the direct external attack of *Les Patineurs*, *Gala Performance*, *Coppélia*, etc. But one has the uneasy feeling that in the very refined ballet of today these qualities are considered rather vulgar.

One hears so many of our young dancers say: "Oh, but our technique is so much stronger now." I doubt if Cecchetti would have thought so. I know of no young dancers who could execute his advanced work as he would wish it executed. The range of it is beyond the static and rigid dancer of today. We must not confuse technique with tricks; the mere ability to execute the famous 32 *fouettés* on place and without falling over is not enough justification for their existence. What is a Catherine Wheel if no sparks or stars fly off it?

Present-day neglect of Cecchetti arises largely from ignorance. A few old-fashioned and entirely non-essential eccentricities are seized upon, his beautiful *port de bras* is presented as a caricature, his syllabus is torn to pieces by those who know little of it as an actual syllabus and nothing at all of those fundamental qualities insisted upon by Cecchetti in his teaching of it. Admittedly to teach nothing but a syllabus is a weakness, but Cecchetti did not do so. To my knowledge he gave a fair proportion of unseen *allegro* in every lesson.

A greater spirit of co-operation between all jealously isolated "methods" would help English ballet—perhaps on some far distant day our dancers will be examined on their dancing and not mainly on their knowledge of a syllabus. Have they a good line and balance? Can they jump and beat? Have they speed, lightness, strength, grace and brilliance? Cecchetti, with his direct link with the great historic founders of the classic ballet could—and his inspiration still can—give all those things so many of which are lacking today. But no! Those of us still remaining who had the honour to be his pupils concentrate busily on standardising his syllabus out of existence, while the great heritage of logical truth he left us is slipping away for ever. What is the use of it all if, as Cecchetti said, "*Vous êtes jolie belle fille mais un morceau de bois.*"

ENRICO CECCHETTI as he looked at the time Molly Lake was one of his pupils.



East of Suez and Back

NEW BOOKS
Reviewed by PETER WILLIAMS

Dance and Magic Drama in Ceylon, by Beryl de Zoete (Faber & Faber, 36*s*.)
Rhythm in the Heavens, the autobiography of Ram Gopal (Secker & Warburg, 25*s*.)

THE Orient has not, up to this moment, played a very great part in the dance literature of the world. By strange coincidence two books have come out at the same time—one by a European who went on a search for the truth in the East, the other who has brought the art of the East to the West.

Beryl de Zoete has already taken us on magical progresses to Bali (*Dance and Drama of Bali*) and to Southern India (*The Other Mind*), and now we accompany her to the spicéd isle of Ceylon. We trudge with her through thick jungle and paddy fields in search of the *Kohomba Kankaria* and all kinds of magical and mystical rites and ceremonies. She is a great painter in words and her canvasses take on the quality of a Henri Rousseau painting except that they are not quite of such a "Sunday" nature—a seven-day-a-week painter is she. They are crowded canvasses, full of brilliant sunlight, deep and lush jungle green, the glitter of Kandyan dance costumes and superb elephant trappings. Yet the volume is not all colour and pageantry because Beryl de Zoete has gone to great trouble to describe the dance teaching and the actual dances themselves. She has, in fact, achieved something most rare in books on the dance—a sound technical dance description combined with a Sitwellian ability to touch occasions great and small with poetic imagery. Many of the beautiful photographs have been taken by the author herself and these add greatly to a volume which is good to hold and behold. How much dance literature would benefit from similar visits by Beryl de Zoete to Spain, South America, or Japan!

RAM GOPAL has chosen a good title for his autobiography—*Rhythm in the Heavens*—but, in fact, he takes us on a switchback ride that plunges and ascends between the celestial and terrestial spheres. It is hard to imagine that a dancer's life could be otherwise but the dance of India is so inexorably bound up with mysticism that it comes as something of a shock to find it mixed up with anything so mundane as laudatory press-cutting quotations. Like all great dancers, Ram Gopal had to struggle in his early years; not in his case against poverty because his family were well-to-do, but against prejudice. Dancing in India had fallen into such disrepute that its revival and survival has been mainly due to the great work of Uday Shankar and Ram Gopal. Certainly it was these two who made the West conscious of a very great dance art, and it is a little sad to read towards the end of this book how little India has appreciated this fact. When he recently tried to collect dancers and backing for a company he was met, in India, by nothing but evasion and intrigue in higher quarters.

It is, of course, always remarkable that dancers can write at all and Ram Gopal tells his story well and with a sense of humour. The principal characters are well defined and alive, particularly noticeable in the quiet dignity and beauty of his mother and the sterner qualities of his father. Yet I cannot help feeling that his "deeper" thoughts and the mysticism would have been better reserved for another book.

The Life and Death of Variety

The House the Stoll Built, the story of the Coliseum Theatre by Felix Barker (Frederick Muller, 25*s*.)

THE generation which did not go to the theatre before the early 'thirties missed something, for it never knew the excitement of going to variety at the Coliseum. We would arrive early in order to look at Byam Shaw's mighty drop curtain, trying to pick out the various celebrities depicted on it, all jumbled together in a Veronese-like palace. There in front was Adeline Genée, in a butterfly costume, and Pavlova as a dragonfly. What a feather in your cap it was if you could discover Ellen Terry, Tree, Bernhardt, or Mark Hambourg in the oddly-assorted throng! Then this curtain would rise and the orchestra, a hundred strong, would strike up the overture as a prelude to several hours of enchantment. These were hours which realised the true meaning of the word—variety. Excerpts from operas would be followed by performing seals or monkeys; musical clowns would rub shoulders with one-act plays starring artists such as Irene Vanbrugh, or Yvonne Arnaud, sometimes the programme would even include sporting events.

Then there was the ballet, and seldom can I remember any performance without some kind of dancing. It was to the Coliseum that the Diaghilev Ballet returned to England after the First World War. Ballet has good reason to be grateful to "S'roswald" (the name by which Sir Oswald Stoll was affectionately known by his staff), because he was the first person to bring Russian and other dancers to a great new public at popular prices. Nobody minded then, as they would today, that *La Boutique Fantasque* or *Le Train Bleu* were shown in immediate juxtaposition with performing animals or clowns; in those days such variety seemed to be an essential part of theatre. It was at the Coliseum that Woizikovsky's company and Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo appeared in the 'thirties, not to mention performances by Markova, Dolin, Ninette de Valois, Nemchinova and so many others.

But the famous front-curtain has vanished and, according to this book, was recently cut-up to cover rostrums. Sir Oswald is dead, and so, alas, is the form of entertainment which he slaved to build up with such taste and dignity. Had he been a less far-sighted person, this book would have little interest beyond the usual annals of any theatre. As it is, the story of this rather taciturn man, who abhored "blue" jokes and believed that everything in the theatre should be decent, is also a most important chapter in the history of popular entertainment in this country. To those of us who remember, Felix Barker's book is a sentimental and nostalgic journey; to a later generation it may come as something of a revelation to know that St. Martin's Lane has not always been dominated by American musicals.

The Dangers of Victorian Ballet

Victorian Ballet Girl, the tragic story of Clara Webster, by Ivor Guest (A. & C. Black, 21*s*.)

MORALS were not all that were in danger when the Victorian miss left the safe confines of her home and took to professional ballet dancing. Fire was a very real and ever-present danger and many suffered from it or were even killed by it in the theatre. Among the most notable casualties from the naked flame was that white hope of British ballet—Clara Webster. Her story and tragically short life is the subject of Ivor Guest's latest delving into the Romantic era of the last century. But this volume is more than just the story of a dancer, it is also the natural history of the ballet theatre in Victorian times and the conditions of those who worked in it. The book has a Dickensian quality and could almost form the background for one of that famous writer's novels.

I could not have a greater admiration for the way in which Ivor Guest brings these dancers of the past alive. How easy it would have been for such books to become stuffy historical tracts, yet as it is they read like enthralling novels. Clara Webster came from a famous theatrical family in Bath and died in London after her dress caught alight while dancing in the *Revolt of the Harem* at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. It is a sad little story but one which should give dancers of today some encouragement, because the conditions under which they now work are almost luxurious in comparison; apart from anything else they are now no longer outcasts from society.

There are a number of charming illustrations, and I very much like the decorative initials at the beginning of each chapter. It is lucky for ballet literature that there is someone like Ivor Guest who will take infinite pains to get every known fact about dancers who would not, on the surface, seem to be subjects for popular reading and then present it to us in a scholarly but easy style. His next book which is the story of Dame Adeline Genée will be awaited with high expectations.

Popular Picture Biographies

Nadia Nerina by Cyril Swinson. Dancers of Today, No. 11. (A. & C. Black, 7*s*. 6*d*.)
John Gilpin by Cyril Swinson. Dancers of Today, No. 12 (A. & C. Black, 7*s*. 6*d*.)

WHEN this series first started a few years ago the volumes were little more than picture books, undoubtedly much cherished by stage-door fans but otherwise of little interest to the more serious minded reader. Now all that has changed, and although the pictures of a dancer's development are equally good, Cyril Swinson's critical appraisal of each artist is equally valuable. This change was most noticeable in a previous volume on Svetlana Beriosova. The biographical material is not of a press-handout nature but a seriously considered appraisal in which the particular artist's faults are analysed as well as their qualities. The subject could derive much benefit from Cyril Swinson's words; the public and critics will also have a sound guide by which to assess the particular artist's work in the theatre. The pictures of Nerina date back to her early years as a promising student in South Africa in 1943; those of Gilpin start when he won a ballroom dancing competition at the age of six in Portsmouth. Both are books of far greater value than their modest price might suggest.

Mike Davis Looks at London's Festival Ballet, photographs by Mike Davis and edited by A. George Hall (C.P. Enterprises, 7*s*. 6*d*.)

FOR the past year or so Mike Davis has been almost exclusive photographer to London's Festival Ballet, and the results of his work are now all gathered together in this book. It looks rather like a souvenir album which is no doubt a good idea in making it economically within reach of the average theatre audience, but it does not always give these fine pictures the sort of treatment they deserve. The casual reader might get the impression that this represents the entire output of the company over the past eight years when, in actual fact, it shows but a fragment of what this non-State-supported company has achieved. The whole thing is excellent value for money, but as it is mainly intended to show the art of the photographer it seems a pity that there could not have been fewer pictures and more full-page ones.

Unfair to Offenbach

ffenbach-Rosenthal: *Gaîté Parisienne*. Meyerbeer-Lambert: *Les Patineurs*—excerpts. Boston Pops Orchestra (Arthur Fiedler). RCA RD-27020. 12in. 37*s*. 6½*d*.

AM afraid that I cannot agree with the opinion Sol Hurok expresses in his sleeve-note—that Manuel Rosenthal exercised "enorous taste" in putting together the score for lassine's *Gaîté Parisienne*. On the contrary, I ave always felt that his noisy arrangement ust be held responsible for having given ousands of people a distorted idea of the mposer. For all the exuberant gaiety of ffenbach's music, it has an elegance and harm which largely eluded the arranger. And hen the score is given as hectic and aggressive performance as this one by the Boston Pops, stening becomes more of an endurance test han a pleasure.

There is, of course, an element of vulgarity in ffenbach's music, but it is a glittering, Second mpire vulgarity, which is not at all the same hing as the 20th-century and—if I may use the ord without being accused of anti-American-m—transatlantic, brashness that comes across om this record.

Susskind's recording with the Covent Garden rchestra is abridged, so that anyone wanting he complete score must choose between the ew RCA version and the older HMV one by the same orchestra and conductor. The RCA is much more brilliantly recorded, though the percussion is far too prominent, and also includes four of the dances from Les Patineurs —*Valse*, *Pas de Badowa*, *Quadrille* and *Galop*. The Boston Pops take a more restrained view of Meyerbeer than of Offenbach and give an enjoyable performance of this selection, but Irving's fuller version on Decca is played with greater lightness and buoyancy.

"BLUE" GIRL: Yvonne Lakier, soloist of the Royal Ballet (formerly Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet), as one of the skaters dressed in blue in Ashton's Les Patineurs, *which the company is presenting this month at Covent Garden.*
Photos: Houston Rogers

Ballroom and Ice-rink

J. Strauss-Dorati: *Graduation Ball*. Meyerbeer-Lambert: *Les Patineurs*. Ballet Theatre Orchestra (Joseph Levine). Capitol P8360. 12in. 41*s*. 8½*d*.

IT was in his production of *Graduation Ball* for Ballet Theatre that Lichine first introduced the more spectacular classical *pas de deux* in place of the *Sylphide and the Scotsman* divertissement. It was to be expected, therefore, that in this recording by the Ballet Theatre Orchestra we should be given the waltz from *Night in Venice* instead of the Sylphide's charming nocturne. The *Auf der Jagd* music for the Fouetté Competition is omitted—perhaps Lucia Chase's girls are not spinning as well as they used to, or was the number cut merely to fit the ballet score on to one record side?

The same consideration seems to have influenced Levine's choice of tempi, the greater majority of the movements being raced through at speeds which would be most unseemly, and in one or two cases impossible, for Lichine's young ladies and cadets. No, this is not *Graduation Ball* as I like to remember it, nor do I care very much for Ballet Theatre's coarse blaring brass.

Fistoulari's Decca version has all the lilting grace missing here, and even though the performance is spread across two sides, it is well worth the extra cost. Decca have recently re-processed their recording, incidentally, and have given it an attractive new cover picture, a colour photograph of a specially-posed group from Festival Ballet's production.

The music of *Les Patineurs* goes comfortably on to the reverse of the Capitol without the need for any undue haste on the conductor's part. This side is altogether much more enjoyable, but the Decca performance by the London Symphony Orchestra under Irving is better played.

More Strangers in Spain

Espana!—Ravel: *Boléro*. *Alborada del Gracioso*. Rimsky-Korsakov: *Capriccio Espagnol*. Albeniz: *Triana*. Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra (Felix Slatkin). Capitol P8357. 12in. 41*s*. 8½*d*.

AS well as having the same catch-title as a Decca "Espana!" which I reviewed two months ago, this Capitol disc exploits an identical formula: three longish pieces of pseudo-Spanish music and one short example of the genuine article.

The Decca record is at the moment a great favourite of dealers for demonstrating equipment—and understandably so, for it is probably one of the most brilliant recordings ever made. The Capitol, though not aspiring to such exalted hi-fi peaks, is in its different way quite vividly "Full dimensional."

As for the performances, the playing is more polished than the LSO's on the Decca, but it is a matter of taste whether you prefer Slatkin's more controlled account of *Capriccio Espagnol* or Argenta's fiery reading. The remaining items are different on the two discs, and if you are interested in this kind of collection you must make your own choice between the two

"BLUE" BOY: Johaar Mosaval in the rôle, created by Harold Turner, of the Skater in Blue in Les Patineurs, *danced to Constant Lambert's arrangement of music from Meyerbeer's operas* Le Prophète *and* L'Etoile du Nord. *Two recordings of the music are reviewed this month.*

programmes. The Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra on this showing sounds a most worthy and musicianly group. Their highly conscientious performance of *Boléro* is not at all what one might expect from that wicked city.

The Cockerel Crows Again

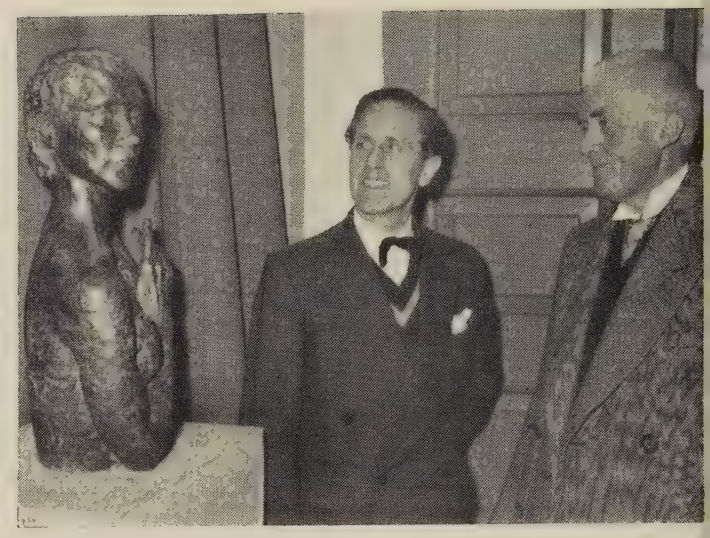
Rimsky-Korsakov: *Le Coq d'Or* Suite. *Russian Easter Festival* Overture. Balakirev orch. Casella: *Islamey*. Philharmonia Orchestra (Sir Eugene Goossens). HMV ALP1490. 12in. 41*s*. 8½*d*.

THE sleeve is decorated with a cut-out of Baron's striking colour photograph of Riabouchinska as the Golden Cockerel. This, and the wording "*Le Coq d'Or* Ballet Suite" might reasonably lead one to expect a performance of at least some of the music as arranged by Tcherepnine for Fokine's one-act ballet version. What is actually played is the more familiar four-movement suite by Glazunov and Steinberg, available in five other LP versions. But as Tcherepnine incorporated all this material into his score, no one who buys the record is likely to be disappointed—at least so far as content is concerned.

Reservations must be made about the performance. Sir Eugene Goossens' 78 recording of the same music, made in the heyday of the Ballets Russes, remained unsurpassed until the advent of LP. But although the engineers have here provided reproduction that allows the music its full due of glamour and glitter, the performance falls asleep with King Dodon in the Slumber Song of the first movement and never really wakes up again. I still prefer Dobrowen's more vital treatment on Columbia.

Goossens makes amends on the reverse with glowing performances of the unjustly-maligned *Russian Easter Festival* Overture and of Balakirev's *Islamey* in Casella's orchestration. It might be a good idea for HMV to issue these separately, particularly the *Russian Easter Festival*.

HER OWN TUTU: Beryl Grey, who opened the National Book League Exhibition, with Ivor Guest, the exhibition's organiser. Grey's tutu for Sleeping Beauty *was one of the many items exhibited.*
Photos: G. B. L. Wilson



BUST OF BERIOSOVA: Algeranoff, famous character dancer and a member of Pavlova's company, discussing Gilley's sculpture of Beriosova with Cyril Beaumont. The many books by Beaumont must amount to the greatest number of ballet books exhibited by any one person.

400 Ballet Books on Show

IT is difficult to say which is the more remarkable—the fact that there are so many bad books written about ballet, or the fact that there are so many good ones. Good books, bad books, together with indifferent books, big books, small books, books of all colours, books for which you have been searching for years rubbing spines with books you have been trying to forget for months—all these found a place at the exhibition organized by Ivor Guest for the National Book League, at their premises at 7 Albemarle Street, London, W.1. Over 400 books on ballet were on view, and the bemused balletomane-bibliophile having browsed his way through this mammoth collection might have found food in the sobering thought that no attempt had been made to gather together a complete ballet library.

However, if completeness eluded even the indefatigable Ivor Guest, this at least must surely be an exhibition rarely, if ever, rivalled for comprehensiveness. Restricting itself solely to the field of classical ballet it included almost every important book and manuscript published since the 15th century. Yet the exhibition, which was opened by Beryl Grey, does not confine itself to books, but also includes various magazines and souvenir programmes, to say nothing of the costumes, paintings and stage models with which Philip Dyer, the artistic adviser, has sought to give the exhibition variety.

Everyone interested in ballet books will have a fine time gloating over this splendid selection. If their pleasure is at all diminished by the organizers' natural reluctance to permit them to finger and thumb the rarities of their choice, they can find compensation in acquiring the exhibition catalogue, which is itself a generously well-annotated dance bibliography that may itself one day become something of a collector's item.

C.B.

What YOU Think

Letters to the Editor should be as short as possible

'Royal' confusion in provinces

SIR: I have been reading your article "The Royal Division" in the November issue, and I wholeheartedly agree with you that it is time it was made possible to distinguish between the two companies.

I am enclosing a cutting from a newspaper advertising the fact that the Royal Ballet (with no mention of "formerly the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet") are appearing in Sheffield. As you will see, this can be very misleading for many people in the provinces have no idea that the Royal Ballet (Fonteyn's company) is touring America. While I agree that both companies are entitled to call themselves the Royal Ballet it is probably very confusing. Not to the regular ballet-goers, but to that section of the public who are seeing ballet for the first time, or are just sufficiently acquainted to associate Fonteyn with the Royal Ballet, and wherever the Royal Ballet is advertised they will expect to see her dancing the principal rôles. They will no doubt feel very disappointed and a little cheated when this is not so. Will they not form the impression that there is one Royal Ballet for London and another for the provinces?

B. White

87 *Bright Street, Sheffield*

SIR: I would like to add my opinion to that of many others who believe that the Royal Ballet (formerly Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet) is wrongly named. Recently when they were on their provincial tour I saw them in Manchester, and thought then that it was unfair for them to have the name "Royal Ballet." I feel that they are potentially an excellent company, but their name does them a disservice.

Many people who only see posters advertising the Royal Ballet hope that they will see Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes and are disappointed. Some of the repertoire is extremely good, for instance *Solitaire*, but this company is not yet ready for such a distinguished title.

D. Michael Smith

Chairman Manchester University Ballet Society, Lancashire Independent College, Manchester 16

This controversy now having reached the national press there is no point in continuing it here, so the correspondence must now cease.—EDITOR.

Are ballet films good box-office?

SIR: The showing of the Bolshoi Ballet's film *Giselle* and the article on the films made by Martha Graham and Ruth St. Denis brings once again to mind the fact that no similar records exist either of the repertoire of any of our ballet companies, and, more important, of individual performances of genius which cannot be preserved by dance notation.

After the Royal Ballet's present gruelling tour it will presumably have an equally tiring season in London. Meanwhile, Fonteyn will be one year nearer to retirement, and we shall *still* have no record of her as Aurora, or the Firebird, or Chloe, or Odette-Odile, nor a fitting record of Markova in *Giselle* or *Les Sylphides* to be able to show students of the future or even non-ballet audiences of the present.

In the future students will be able to see with their own eyes that all that has been said about Ulanova is true, but all that will exist of first flowering of the British ballet will be fading memories, photographs and the eulogies of critics.

Can't some producer be made to realise that ballet could be cinema box-office?

Janice Greenberg

14 *Linden Lea, London, N.*2

Left out of the triangle

SIR: Your recent editorial welcomes the enterprise of the Edinburgh Festival, and rightly draws attention to the part which designers could play. Has another collaborator not been forgotten?

Consider the great ballets of the past. Almost without exception there is listed among their makers someone who is not a composer, designer or choreographer. Credit is accorded him in various ways: book by ....., librettc by ..... or, more simply, "a ballet by ....." He may be a poet in his own right—Vaudoyer in the case of *Le Spectre de la Rose* or have little other claim to fame as with Begitchev and Geltser, who wrote *Swan Lake*. He is *always* present!

Can I be alone in finding that many recen ballets seem to deny their theatrical origin and fail to be drama expressed as dance? No librettist is now named: his service is spurned. The Edinburgh project, so praiseworthy in other ways, seems to be continuing this unbalanced approach to ballet as theatre.

Ian Duf

5 *Kensington Park Road, W.*11

BALLET PERSPECTIVES : 3

La Fête Etrange

continued from page 23

rime intention, I think it unjust to imply that er choreography has little action. The dances re, for the most part, slow-paced, but nevertheless fluent and imaginative. Perhaps her rongly marked use of choreographic *leitotif* (the consistent association of certain haracters with individual steps as a kind of gnature movement) is a little ingenuous, but he general creative level of the choreography is xtremely high. The way, for example, the ances of the principals are blended with those f the guests is masterly.

Also in this work, like Tudor and Ashton, he shows the ability to combine dance-images nd straightforward production into a complete hole. As an example of this one has only to onsider the first of the ballet's two climaxes—hat might be called the "quiet climax."

The Country Boy and the Bride are dancing. he Groom appears at the top of the steps ading into the château. He looks round at he guests, smiling; suddenly his eye lights on he boy and the girl, and his body freezes into action, they halt. He and they remain otionless, the boy looking away, the Groom oking straight across the stage at his Bride. s the singer sings *Soir*, three girls dance a range, soft *pas de trois*, but the Groom and is Bride continue to stare fixedly at each other.

The dance ends, and the Bride comes forward in a *pas de bourrée*, her hands held out in supplication, When she reaches the steps the Groom comes down. As he descends, the Bride lets her fingers run down the balustrade of the steps, nearly—but never quite—touching the Groom's hand. The Groom walks away.

The hands sliding down the balustrade but never touching is a good instance, both of Howard's use of symbolism and also the almost cinematic close-up detail she uses in this ballet. Here the poignancy of this episode is later underlined by a semi-repeat at the end of the ballet. After the estrangement, the Bride is going up the steps. The Country Boy, who has tried in vain to console her, runs *his* hand up the rail as she ascends. Again the hands never touch. This small incident, with its mirror-image repeat, manages to suggest the whole essence of the ballet.

The ballet, which strangely enough has never been seen outside England, was first produced at the Arts Theatre on May 23, 1940. The cast included Frank Staff as Julien; Maude Lloyd as the Young Châtelaine; and David Paltenghi as the Young Nobleman. The work was first included in the repertory of The London-Rambert Ballet Company on June 20, 1940, with, I believe, the same cast. The three original principals have possibly never been equalled in these rôles. Lloyd's gentle distinction, the animal vigour of the young Staff and the cold nobility of Paltenghi set a high standard for their successors. Others who danced the Châtelaine during the early years included Peggy Van Praagh and Sally Gilmour. After September 1941, when the company's home at the Arts Theatre was forced to close, *La Fête Etrange* disappeared from the repertory until its revival by the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet.

This took place at the Sadler's Wells Theatre on March 25, 1947. The cast included Donald Britton as the Country Boy; June Brae as the Bride; and Anthony Burke as the Bridegroom.

The Country Boy has since been danced by Leo Kersley, Michael Boulton, Pirmin Trecu, Michael Hogan and David Poole. Others to take the rôle of the Bride have been Anne Heaton, Peggy Van Praagh, Jane Shore, Elaine Fifield, Svetlana Beriosova, Margaret Hill, Sheilah O'Reilly and Sara Neil. The Groom has been danced by John Cranko, David Poole, Michael Hogan, David Gill, Peter Wright, Donald MacLeary and Edward Miller.

La Fête Etrange has been one of those deservedly lucky ballets that very rarely receive a bad performance. However, when the work was revived recently, after a lapse of some years, by the Royal Ballet's second company, it was noticeable that the work's atmosphere had evaporated. As both branches of the Royal Ballet now appear to be taking up their London quarters at Covent Garden, and as the Opera House almost certainly would not be suitable for the ballet, it seems tragically possible that we may never see *La Fête Etrange* again. One solution to the problem might be for the Royal Ballet to relinquish their rights to the work and for it to return to the safe keeping of the Ballet Rambert. It would be a fine gesture on the part of Covent Garden, and would help ensure the survival of one of the most important of English ballets.

Dance and Dancers . . . . AT HOME

SOVIET VARIETY CONCERT

AUTUMN, as well as being the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, is also the time ach year for British-Soviet Friendship Month. very November a highly superior concert party f Soviet artists descends upon our shores and ravels up and down the country giving an often izarre, but usually entertaining, potpourri of oviet culture.

In amongst the apparently random collection f violinists, jugglers, baritones and what-have-ou, there is always included a group of ancers. This year's programme which started s British tour at the Festival Hall on November , included the completely unannounced British ébut of the high-ranking Bolshoi ballerina rina Tikhomirnova, wife of the Soviet choreographer Asaf Messerer.

It must be admitted at once that the dice had een cruelly loaded against her. She arrived vithout a partner, and to have to dance *The Dying Swan* on the bare Festival Hall platform, enied the benefits of theatrical illusion, in a own where first Pavlova, later Markova and inally Ulanova have made the dance their own, s in all conscience bad enough. But to face all his on an empty stomach and no rehearsal, aving been delayed to literally the last noment by bad flying weather, was little short f tragic.

Yet once having given her full marks for ppearing at all, and after making every ossible allowance for the sheer bad luck that ttended her, her performance was not what ne would expect from a prima ballerina of her vorld renown.

Dancing a choreographic version of *The Dying Swan* slightly dissimilar from any we have seen before, she conveyed neither the pathos of Markova nor the heroism of Ulanova. The bumpiness of her *pas de bourrées* could no more be completely explained by the unevenness of the stage than the inexpressiveness of her *port de bras* and the melodramatic staginess of her facial gestures could be altogether excused by the rigours of her journey.

Yet to be charitable, Tikhomirnova, who is nowadays, I believe, her company's first choice for Aurora, obviously has far more to offer than was made apparent at this unfortunate début, and it is to be hoped that London will soon have the opportunity of seeing her in fairer conditions.

In a generally entertaining programme the other official dance highlights were provided by two ex-Moiseyev folk dancers, Yuri Mironov and Lily Novgorodova and an Uzbek dancer, S. Haibuchaeva. Yet curiously enough I personally got most pleasure from a beautifully executed acrobatic *pas de deux* by two acrobats of the Leningrad State Variety Theatre, Z. Evtikova and N. Faterev. The girl, Evtikova, had obviously received ballet training and the sweet simple grace with which she modestly undertook her near impossible feats proved immensely appealing. **C.B.**

THE URALS ENSEMBLE

THERE seems to be no end to the groups of jolly peasant visitors who grace our stages. Never before have we heard so many strident voices and seen so much uninhibited leaping, turning, waddling and gliding as in the past two years. Apart from the Moiseyev Ensemble from Moscow, which was almost all dancing, these companies present a mixture of song, high spirits and dance with the accent mainly on the two former. The Urals Ensemble, which opened a three-week season at Drury Lane Theatre on November 11, followed the same formula but with a slight difference. The whole presentation was placed within the framework of a local fiesta in the Ural Mountains. The first part of the programme, *Spring Outing in the Urals*, ran through without a break, thus avoiding the curtain-drawings and short numbers which so easily destroy continuity and cause the spectator to lose interest.

It was mainly well produced with the different songs and dances emerging from the crowd in much the same way as Fokine used his crowd scenes in *Petrushka*. As with all Russian dance groups, the women moved with great style—the upper part of their bodies rigid except for slight swaying from side to side and the shuffling feet moving so quickly that they appear to be propelled by clockwork. The male dancers perform "cobblers" with as much apparent ease as walking; when they are not crouched in this kicking dance they seem to be leaping in the air, sometimes in a *manège* of turns which seems almost to defy the laws of gravity.

The blue cyclorama made a suitable background for the colourful costumes and gave a feeling of the open air.

The second part of the programme was divided into a number of short items. Many of the dance *ensembles* seemed rather familiar from other groups, especially one in which the dancers formed into a troika. The most successful, *The Fearless Hunters*, opened with a tableau

of hunters in the snow, and was presumably based on a well-known Russian painting. Before returning to the original group, the male dancers performed a number of witty and brilliantly executed solos. The very real success with the audience of these danced numbers proved emphatically that the audience comes to such shows mainly to see dancing, while too much choral singing merely dampens the proceedings.

An almost regular feature of these Soviet entertainments is the inclusion of some British numbers. On this occasion we were regaled with several English and Scottish folk songs and, amazing to relate, a Scottish dance. These are obviously given in good faith as a friendly gesture towards the British public, but they are bound to remain nothing more than amusing curiosities. Personally, I would think that the singing in English of our national anthem—which they did charmingly—was enough, The Highland dance proved extremely correct and the eight dancers showed their understanding of the neat footwork which is so essential. But in their attempt to make it all very proper they lacked the very spirit of Scottish dancing. Their tartans were also most improbable, though this was perhaps preferable to the rising of the clans, that might have been brought about had they chosen an authentic Campbell, McLeod or MacDonald. Yet it is all as if the Sheffield Orpheus Choir or the Dagenham Girl Pipers went to Russia and gave over a large part of their programme to Russian songs and dances.

The programme ended much as it had started, only this time instead of the mountain picnic the whole company had gone to a fair, with its attendant roundabout or maypole. The scene was full of colour and lively movement.

While we are grateful to the British-Soviet Friendship Society for bringing this company to England, the time has come for somebody to decide exactly to whom these shows are intended to appeal. In the past two years the public who will go to anything, whatever it may be, from the U.S.S.R., has dwindled considerably. Therefore it becomes essential for the shows to have some kind of "direction." The music and singing are not good enough to attract those only interested in this side; nor is there enough dancing, splendid though it is, to bring in the vast dance public.

It has been most noticeable of late—and this applied equally to the groups from Hungary, Poland and Bulgaria—that the choral and solo singing does not provoke any great warmth from the public. This naturally leads me to assume that most people are there only to see the dancing. I would think that the dance vocabulary from these Russian outposts is varied enough to make up a programme without having to resort to long passages of song; though undoubtedly a singing accompaniment to some of the dancing would add considerably to the theatrical effect, much as do the singers heighten the impact of Fokine's Polovtsian dances in Borodin's *Prince Igor*. **P.W.**

TELEVISION

MARCEL MARCEAU

Given on BBC Television on November 18. Presented by Margaret Dale.

THIS somewhat arbitrary selection of Marcel Marceau's *pantomimes de style*, together with one "Bip" number, showed that television could not kill his talents, vulnerable as they seem to be to this medium. On the other hand it certainly did little to enhance them. His art on stage is something more than highly polished mime, balanced with great skill and technical control. On television he seems rather remote, a white figure surrounded by darkness, and little more than his remarkable technique comes across.

Certainly two items came over excellently: *The Walk Against the Wind* and *The Tightrope Walker*. Each of these was possibly more effective than when seen in the theatre. With the cameras placed in such a way that no feet in contact with the ground could be seen, the illusion of *The Tightrope Walker* was remarkably authentic.

The Staircase seemed to lose most of its humour and much of the technique also disappeared with the inevitable loss of a dimension on television. *Adolescence, Maturity, Old Age and Death* made nothing like the strong impression it did on stage. It appeared rather weakly ingenious but little more, except for two moving seconds—when the hand slowly passed across the face to reveal the change from youth to maturity and, finally, the limp hand falling to interrupt the harp background.

In *Bip at the Dance Hall*, which I thought was given as *Bip at the Party* during his recent London season (the one where he rings the doorbell, wipes his feet on a mat which slides away, and so on), an irritatingly non-stop jazzy musical background grated on the nerves. On television also this item seemed to go at lightning speed, and what with close-ups and long-shots one found it hard to piece the number together and identify each passage of mime. The final impression was one of a few moments of rather hysterical virtuosity.

I would have preferred either of his splendid short films to this programme, particularly *Le Jardin Public*. Television, by exposing some of the limitations of his art, somehow made his world less attractive. **E.C.M.**

JUDY GARLAND SHOW

JUDY GARLAND was supported by a *corps de ballet* of ten male dancers, when she opened a limited season at the Dominion Theatre on October 22. The choreography was by Robert Alton. Slick, brilliant and functional, it had a professional gloss that made any English attempt at similar work look cheap and dowdy by comparison. Certainly it did not reach any great imaginative heights, but it revealed an efficient craftsmanship that we just never see in our native attempts to provide popular dance entertainment.

The small American company, with Bert May and Meurisse Duree as featured dancers, put the numbers over with immense verve and punch, all appearing to be of a technical standard that would not disgrace a ballet company. It was a remarkable demonstration and proof of the terrific reservoir of talent possessed by American ballet. **C.B.**

JUDY AND THE BOYS: Judy Garland, centre, with the boys whose dancing and spirited numbers added greatly to the enormous success of the Judy Garland show when it recently played at London's Dominion Theatre for a month. *Photo: Richi*

DANCE IN FILMS

Programme given by the London Ballet Circle on November 23 at the French Institute.

THIS new programme was an improvement on the one arranged by the London Ballet Circle earlier in the year. The most interesting were a brief glimpse of *The Corsair* (from Leningrad), a silent film of Popov the Clown taken during an actual performance, and the 1924 film of Anna Pavlova which includes *Le Cygne* with its opening passage repeated. An early film of Ulanova in the *pas de deux* from *Swan Lake* (*Act* 2) was interesting in that comparisons could be made with the work of a much more mature Ulanova as seen last year.

Brief glimpses of Fonteyn and Somes were seen in the *pas de deux* from *Les Sylphides*, taken from a sentimental British film, *The Little Ballerina* (1947). This could have been a most valuable record, too, but unfortunately most of the dancing appeared to have been discarded on the cutting-room floor.

It must be stressed that the Pavlova film was merely made as test shots by Douglas Fairbanks in 1924. They were filmed at midday under primitive conditions against the background of the set of one of his films, *The Thief of Baghdad*, and three days later given a private screening. Peter Brinson has most competently edited the present film; music has been added and this has been selected and synchronised with the assistance of a panel of dancers, who were once members of the Pavlova Company.

But, most regrettably, on this particular casion it was shown at such a greatly increased eed that her delicious *bourrées* on *pointe* in *olumbine* looked fantastic and absurd, and ere was not even time to read the titles of the nces. Something must, therefore, be done to event societies showing this valuable film if ey have not the equipment to screen it operly. Otherwise there will be further petitions of the dancers of today laughing at e great Pavlova. **E.C.M.**

Masters of Georgian Ballet

FROM the strictly academic viewpoint, few more interesting ballet films have come out Russia than *The Masters of Georgian Ballet*, hich opened a mercifully brief London season the Palace Theatre on November 18. From e less pure viewpoint of artistic merit, this m was far less rewarding, yet it showed in a markable way the gap which obviously exists etween the major Russian companies, like the olshoi, Kirov and Stanislavsky, and the arious provincial troupes.

The film is made up of condensed versions of vo ballets from the repertory of the Georgian ate Ballet based in Tbilisi, of which Vachtang haboukiani, perhaps most famed of all Soviet ale dancers, is now principal dancer, choreographer and director.

Before arriving at a too hasty conclusion om this film regarding the condition of Soviet rovincial ballet, two points need to be borne in ind. The first is that none of the various oviet ballet films has given a flattering, or even mpletely fair, impression of the ballets they irport to present. The second point is that he first of the two works shown in the present lm—*Laurencia*—is hardly a typically provinial product, as it was first produced by haboukiani at the Kirov Theatre in 1939 and evived by him at the Bolshoi Theatre as ecently as last year.

If the film does do these two ballets anything ke justice, then they are certainly rather worse han anything we have previously suspected as oming from Russia. *Laurencia*, the more mous of the two, is very freely adapted from opé de Vega's revolutionary play *Fuente vejuno*. To the banal story of the thwarting f a tyrannical Spanish landlord, Chaboukiani ppears to have provided some equally banal horeography, while Alexander Krein's trivial usic is hardly memorable enough to comment pon.

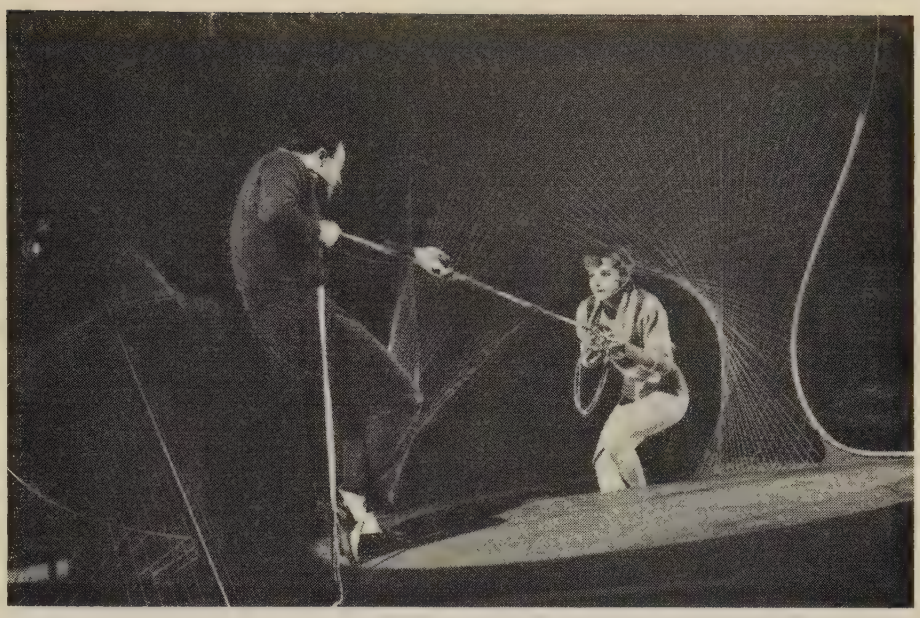
The second ballet *Sinatlé*, meaning "Light," a more recent work, being composed in 1948 n commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of he Georgian Republic. Its allegorical plot ased on an old Georgian legend, Chaboukiani's horeography and Grigori Kiladze's score, all eserve that epithet so unjustly hurled at the olshoi last year—"old-fashioned."

However, both of these ballets may very well ave merits that are obscured by the "cinehatic translation" that Russian film directors pparently love to bestow upon the ballet heatre.

The dancing, while not perhaps outstanding y Bolshoi standards, is pretty good by any ther. Chaboukiani himself, now one presumes pproaching the end of his active career, is still very marvellous dancer. He combines the legant strength of Eglevsky with the lissom uency of Gilpin, and adds to them a flamboyance all his own, symbolized, perhaps, by is moustache. The other dancers of his ompany were less distinguished, yet appear to ossess enough animal high spirits to revitalize half a dozen Western troupes. **C.B.**

Les Girls

IT must be galling for the cinema industry to be made a sort of annual Aunt Sally owing o their choice of film to be shown before the ueen at the Royal Command Film Performnce. Everyone, apart no doubt from the film industry itself, delights in hurling brickbats at this yearly unsuitable offering. There have been so many good films shown over the past months that one wonders who could possibly have dreamed up *Les Girls* as being right for the occasion.



DANCERS IN A WEB: Gene Kelly and Taina Elg in an interesting setting, of which little use was finally made, in the film Les Girls *chosen for the Royal Command Film Show this year. Taina Elg used to be a soloist with the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas and this is her first major acting rôle in films.* *Photo: M.G.M.*

There would have been nothing wrong with showing a good musical, which in fact would, no doubt, have been welcomed by everyone. But this 114 minutes (10,278 feet) of hokum was no dainty dish to set before a queen—or anyone else for that matter.

The idea was a good one—three cabaret girls and their hoofing manager give their very differing versions of an incident which had finally broken up their act some years previously. The only reason for their ever meeting again is because one of them, now Lady Sybil Wren, has spilled her version of the beans in an autobiography. The result is a libel action which hauls the whole act into court. The different versions of the story are told in a series of flash-backs with the libel court as the thread to bind it all together. As stories for musicals go this was fine, but as musicals go *Les Girls* never arrived.

This I find very sad because the combination of Cole Porter music, Gene Kelly, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and Jack Cole choreography should have produced a smash hit. I can remember the time when a Cole Porter score set me humming and tapping for weeks instead of setting me disgruntledly hastening from the theatre. M.G.M. musicals have been second to none, while Kelly and Cole have been responsible for some of our most enchanted evenings in the light musical field. What went wrong?

First and foremost the lamentable playing by all except for Mitzi Gaynor. I am afraid that the worst offender was our own much-publicised Kay Kendall, who played Lady Sybil Wren with all the professional gloss of a suburban housewife in after-dinner charades. The exaggeration of her hand gestures in court and her drunken scene later in the film caused me to wriggle in my seat from sheer embarrassment. She beat Taina Elg by a short head in the Dishonour Stakes, but Elg had more excuse because this one-time member of the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas has had little acting experience. Her vampish Angele Ducros ran the gamut of stock conventions usually associated with such ladies. Gene Kelly's tough charm, which has embellished many a musical film, seems temporarily to have left him. Here he was brash and unconvincing. Only Mitzi Gaynor brought any feeling of what professional playing should be, though even she seemed rather subdued, apart from one scene when she appeared without make-up and with her hair in curling papers. Yet the vitality of the *I Don't Care Girl*, when she impersonated Eve Tanguy, was little in evidence. On these four characters the whole film hung, but even then it could have been saved if there had been one memorable musical number.

Unfortunately Cole Porter could not produce a single number of consequence from the assortment of dreary ditties scattered through the film like soggy plums in a cake which has never risen. All of which can have been of little inspiration to poor Jack Cole, who tried to cook up some suitable choreography. In one number, right at the beginning of the film, he managed to achieve quite an effect with some girls on different levels and of different nationalities. Here Cole produced some of those crisp, slick movements we expect from him. Later Kelly and Taina Elg appeared in a kind of mobile set which seemed pregnant with possibilities, but it never developed and our hopes were still-born. A final number for Kelly and Gaynor used black leather, mackintoshes and boots against a scarlet setting of a carmen's pull-in, yet this proved so pointless that I can only presume that most of the number had been left on the cutting-room floor.

My admiration for those concerned in this film is such that I can find some consolation in that my lugubrious reaction to this entertainment is apparently not shared by many critics and the public on the other side of the Atlantic.

Note for the younger reader: In the very early 'thirties the depression of the great slump was somewhat offset by a bevy of beauties, six or eight in number, who arrived to play in cabaret at the Dorchester Hotel in Park Lane. Immediately these beauties, known as "Les Girls," became the toast of London and the talk of England. Led by one, Mitzi Mayfair, the girls were as talented as they were beautiful. Would that this film, which bears their name but, alas, nothing else, had inherited something from these stars of a past era. **P.W.**

FRANCE

ANTONIO'S SPANISH BALLET

AFTER a long absence Antonio made a triumphant return at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. Seldom has success been so deserved. Antonio appeared in dazzling form; a little reserved at first, but gradually adding his effects until there was no restraining his fiery temperament. Although his *zapateado* is not always strictly classical, his subtlety and amazing virtuosity make it unique. On the other hand, his talents as a producer have brought perfect harmony and taste to this attractively designed programme, which is of an exceptionally high standard for a Spanish company. While some purists may be indignant, Antonio must be given his due. He is a man of the theatre who has not hesitated to take full advantage of his own experience and that of others.

Fantasia Galicia brings the utmost variety to the theme of Galicia. One remembers particularly the *paso a dos*, a dramatic idyll danced with perfect grace by Antonio and Rosita Segovia. Also to be commended was Segovia's *seguidilla* in the *Paso a Cuatro*, which is an exquisite evocation of the Romantic period and a worthy companion to Dolin's *The Pas de Quatre*. *Cerce del Guadalquivir*, on a theme suggested by Lorca, shows the tragic aspect of Andalusia, while *Taberna del Toro* is more traditional and rather what everyone expects from a Spanish company. Again Carmen Rojas distinguished herself with her savage, acid brand of charm.

PILAR LOPEZ BALLET ESPANOL

ONE cannot help deploring the lack of co-ordination between impresarios who have presented two Spanish groups of such quality at the same time. We must pray that similar mistakes will not occur in the future. Great damage was done to Pilar Lopez at the Théâtre de l'Étoile, and it was unforgivable that she should be made the victim of such unnecessary and accidental rivalry. The incomparable purity of her classic style and the discipline of her school makes the public's temporary disaffection all the more appalling. However, the exceptional enthusiasm of her audiences did much to compensate for their smaller numbers.

Antonio Gades and Alberto Portillo danced particularly well, but the exceptional temperament of Eduardo Serrano "El Guito" was outstanding. Under the guidance and influence of Pilar Lopez, this young gipsy could quickly become one of the most brilliant Spanish dancers: he possesses the right qualities.

YVETTE CHAUVIRE AT THE SALLE PLEYEL

UNDER the title of *Rencontre avec Yvette Chauviré* at the Salle Pleyel the Jeunesses Musicales de France inaugurated a series of discussions with the principal figures of contemporary French ballet. Enterprising and ingenious as such a venture is, its success can be far from certain, since it tests the knowledge of the dancer, who also needs the platform manner of a skilled public speaker. But from this trial, Yvette Chauviré, with her spirit and sensitive intelligence, emerged triumphantly.

Quickly dominating her interviewer—Rostislav Hoffmann—she told quite simply to the attentive audience of her début at the Opéra, and of her training, illustrating in movement that which she owes to each of her teachers from Zambelli to Lifar, without overlooking Boris Kniaseff or Victor Gsovsky. Having once established contact with her audience, the dancer gave way to the choreographer for her to present her own version of Debussy's *Arabesque*, a fluid and musical *pas de trois*.

Then the dancer returned to demonstrate three very revealing aspects of her art: technical brilliance in the *Grand Pas Classique* by Gsovsky in which she was partnered by Youly Algaroff; then the expressively varied and captivating style of Lifar's *L'Indecise* and, finally, the dramatic expression and inner warmth of Lifar's *Suite en Ré* (Bach).

This remarkable evening confirmed the quality of an artist whose name is now inscribed among the most notable in the history of the dance. It will be all the more distressing if the Paris Opéra is deprived for long of a ballerina who is held in such great esteem by the eyes of the world.

CZECHOSLOVAK NATIONAL BALLET

RECENT prize winners at the Moscow Youth Festival, the Ballet National Tchécoslovaque opened its season at the Théâtre de l'Etoile on October 29. Of a very much higher standard than the Slovakian group which had been seen earlier, this company showed that it had learned to take advantage of the lessons which the Moiseyev Ensemble has shown, in the same way as have the Hungarian, Rumanian and Polish groups. And with each company the ingredients are the same—freshness, vitality and precision, while the patterns of the dances, the steps and costumes all strongly resemble each other

Sometimes the stage seemed rather crowded in the large group movements so familiar in this type of entertainment. On a strictly choreographic level, one observed a certain taste in the *port de bras* used in such numbers as *Holubicka* (*La petite colombe*). But, as usual, the virtousity of the men overshadowed the grace of the women, especially in the *Danse des Brigands* and in the *Moravian Suite* which ended the programme. The *Jeux de Valachie* showed that there were some real acrobats among the dancers. Even if the company's dances were not altogether authentic, the final impression it left was a very pleasant one.

NEWS IN BRIEF

ON November 22 Les Ballet Africains de Keita Fodéba presented a new programme at the Théâtre de l'Alhambra, preceding the season of the New York Negro Ballet scheduled for the Théâtre des Champs Elysées.

On November 7 at the Maison de la Chimié under the auspices of Danse et Culture and the chairmanship of Serge Lifar, a special evening in homage to Olga Preobrajenksa was held.

Jacques Rouché died at the age of 95 on November 8. A celebrated man of the theatre, who was Director of the Paris Opéra for 30 years, he exercised a very definite influence on the dance through his enlightened taste and wide cultural and artistic background.

The première of Maurice Béjart's new ballet, *Pulcinella* (music by Stravinsky and décor by Bernard Daydé) was given at Liège. Also given in Belgium, but at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels, was Jean-Jacques Etcheverry's new work, *Cancan-Offenbach*.

George Skibine has been selected by Françoise Sagan to produce the choreography for a ballet she has written on the theme of a surprise party. The music is to be by Michel Magne, and it is hoped to present the ballet at Monte Carlo.

Micheline Bardin has been engaged by the Metropolitan Opera, New York.

Liane Daydé, Claude Bessy, Marjorie Tallchief, Peter Van Dijk, Max Bozzoni and Skibine went to Portugal on November 24. Another Paris Opéra group consisting of Daydé, Bessy, Claire Motte, Michel Renault, Bozzoni and Raoul Duflot visited Le Mans on November 7, Belfort on November 14, Monte Carlo on November 19 and Toulouse on December 5. **Marie-Françoise Christout**

AMERICA

NEW YORK CITY BALLET

AFTER an absence of more than eight months, the New York City Ballet returned to its home base for its twentieth season, running from November 19 through to January 19. As reported last month, four new works by George Balanchine, the company's artistic director, are the major news of this engagement. They are *Square Dance*, set to the music of Corelli and Vivaldi, with Patricia Wilde and Nicholas Magallanes dancing to the calls of a square dance caller; *Agon*, to a new score by Igor Stravinsky that was commissioned by the company; *Grand Entry*, to a score by Charles Gounod (Symphony No. 1: 1856), and *Stars and Stripes*, to music by Hershy Kay from themes of John Phillip Sousa. In addition, there are the revivals of George Balanchine's *Apollo* and *Scotch Symphony*. However, Jerome Robbins' *A Visit of Clowns*, to music by Paul Bowles, will not be premièred during this current season.

Before the opening of their New York season, the New York City Ballet appeared on a two-hour television programme of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation from Montreal, and on December 22 appear on the Columbia Broadcasting Studio's cross-country network for their long-awaited presentation of *The Nutcracker*. Leon Barzin, musical director of the company, has returned after a year's leave of absence. New dancers in the company include Conrad Ludlow, formerly with the San Francisco Ballet, Sonia Taanila, Dorothy Scott, Nancy Reynolds, Robert Lindgren and Edward Villela. Jonathan Watts has been elevated to a position of soloist and Todd Bolender is on leave of absence this season. A full report on the four new premières and the two important revivals will appear in our February issue.

DANCERS OF BALI

A COMPANY of Dancers of Bali proved to be one of the major delights of the autumn season and their popularity was so great that their ten-day engagement was extended an additional week before they took off on their trans-continental tour, headed by the great Mario and his protegée I Gusti Ngurah. The company also included seven princesses of the royal line, ranging in age from 9 to 12, and the gamelan orchestra from the royal palace. One of the most effective numbers was the *Ketjak* featuring the male chorus in the narration of the story of the fight between Subali, the Monkey Prince, and Measasura, King of the Demons. The Ketjak chorus, sitting in a semi-circular position, chanted the plot, using wonderful torso movements, striking the floor with their hands for rhythmic accent. This exciting work was reminiscent of the way the Greek National Theatre employed its chorus in a combination of speech, song and dance movement. Mario played the musical intro-

uction to his Kebiar dance on a terompong a eries of gongs on one frame, and I Gusti gurah Raka performed the famous sitting ance, in a half-sitting posture, from the same ork.

Those of us who found so much to admire in enjamin Britten's Eastern-like score for *The rince of the Pagodas* especially relished the amelan orchestra with more than twenty ative instruments. A similar delight was eing this entire company off-stage, sitting ext to Dame Ninette de Valois, watching an dvanced class at Martha Graham's New York udio.

NEW MUSICALS ON BROADWAY

JAMAICA, starring the ravishingly beautiful Lena Horne opposite Ricardo Montalban, is nore in the tradition of the old-fashioned usical comedy in that its book is a negligible ning and chiefly an excuse for some wonderful ngs and some striking dances, which have een choreographed by Jack Cole, who also cored recently in providing dances for the film, *es Girls*. In *Jamaica*, the setting is tropical, nd Cole has produced a series of dances that re notable for their primitive abandon and ative Negro ebullience. Lena Horne's songs re completely choreographed in a highly ylised way and Ricardo Montalban, who has anced in films in the past, is the centre of *each at Night*, a charming dance interlude. lowever, it is the dance group as a whole, eaded by Alvin Ailey and Christyne Lawson, at romps off with the dance honours. And ack Cole again demonstrates his remarkable alent for filling a stage with frenetic dance ction.

The short-lived *Copper and Brass*, starring lancy Walker as a policewoman in love with a zz band musician, was choreographed by Anna okolow. Though she had some of the best oung dancers in the field at her command, her ances seemed unrelated to the plot and did ttle but activate the proceedings.

NEWS IN BRIEF

JACK COLE returns to performing, opening an engagement in Havana on the same night-ub bill as Ginger Rogers.

Robert Cohan, for ten years a soloist in lartha Graham's company, has just joined ole's group.

Janine Charrat, who, with her company of ourteen, created a profound impression on the lew York press, is currently on a cross-country our by bus playing one-night stands.

The Ruth Page Ballet, featuring Mia lavenska, Oleg Briansky, Sonia Arova, Job anders and Doreen Tempest, has started a 3-week tour which will take the company to 74 ties.

Impresario Sol Hurok brings Inbal, the raeli Dance Troupe to America, this month, here they will open in New York prior to a our.

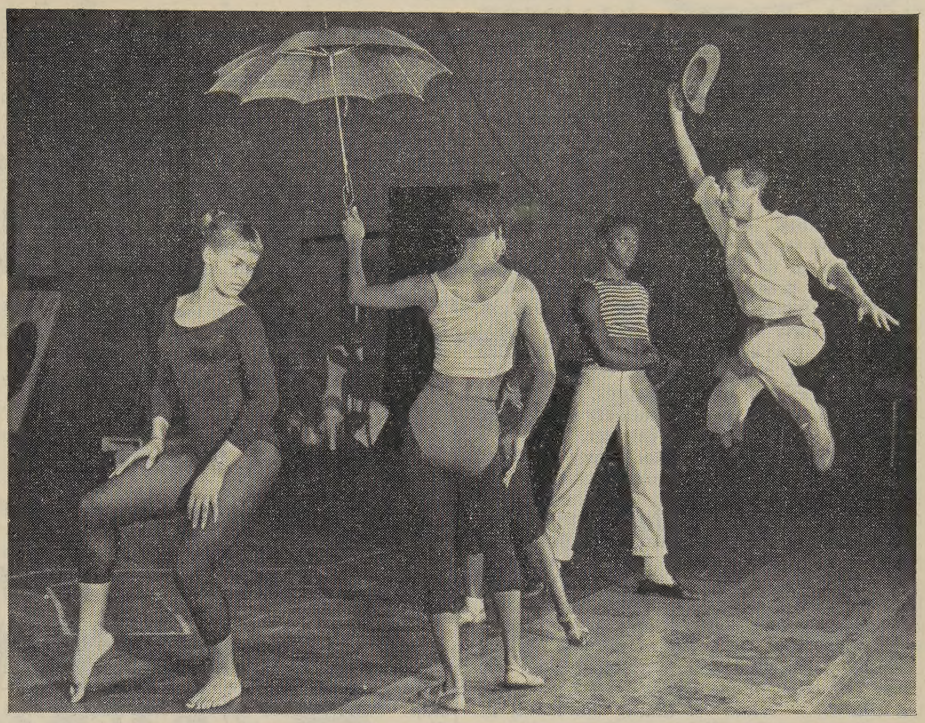
Alicia Markova, who has returned to merica, appears in a series of five perform-nces at the Metropolitan Opera House in *rfeo*. In conjunction with these appearances, DANCE AND DANCERS' American correspondent, as arranged a special exhibition, "Alicia larkova at the Met" for the Dance Alcove of he 58th Street Music Library, consisting of hotographs, programmes, books and other emorabilia.

The Bolshoi Ballet's film opened its New ork engagement on December 16 at the 55th treet Playhouse, just across the street from the lew York City Ballet.

The National Ballet of Canada has signed a ontract with the Government of Mexico for he company to have a three-week season in lexico next June.

George Zoritch and Tatiana Grantzeva have joined Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

Arthur Todd



LIVELY REHEARSAL: Jack Cole (right), who has been responsible for creating the dances in many films and stage musicals as well as dancing himself and appearing as a straight actor, rehearses some of the dancers for the new musical on Broadway—Jamaica. *Photo: Friedman-Abeles*

NEGRO RHYTHMS: Jack Cole's dancers (above and below in two of the spirited numbers from Jamaica, *the musical which stars Lena Horne.* *Photos: Friedman-Abeles*

WITH BALLET RAMBERT ACROSS CHINA

continued from page 15

may leave the country, and although we had bought everything in the officially recognised jade markets, with the aid of knowledgeable interpreters, a preliminary examination of our luggage showed several items required for their museums. The Chinese were extremely sympathetic to our difficulties, and in the end only a few of us had to leave things behind. These were principally embroidered clothes, together with a few pieces of porcelain bought by Ann Horn and Gillian Martlew. Considerate to the last, the Chinese authorities promised that if these objects were not ultimately needed for their museums, they would be returned to us, or alternatively exchanged for similar objects of equal interest.

We left in two parties, after a very sad farewell, for we had made many friends during this superbly organised tour. Our last view of China, before the Gobi Desert and the wastes of Siberia, was the Great Wall glittering in the morning sun and winding through the mists and hills to the horizon. At Irkutsk, we were held up for 6 hours owing to fog and a local snowstorm which, with a high wind, proved very eerie. (At Ulun Bator we had seen a caravan of camels plodding along the old silk route oblivious of our plane warming up on the runway.) When we finally did leave, in one of the amazing TU104 jets, we could not land at Omsk, owing to the fog, and reached Moscow via Sverdlovsk. After a very spartan night in the transit hotel and a busy morning, spent seeing the new University project with Chinese Embassy officials, we returned to the airport just in time to have our flight cancelled for the day. No planes had left Moscow for the West for three days owing to bad conditions and we had to spend another night in our transit hotel. After much pleading, we were allowed to leave for Prague before lunch the next day and our adventures during landing have been well recorded elsewhere! Only Ian Metsis suffered serious damage to his luggage. We reached London and the most sympathetic customs men of our experience, the same evening.

In all, 30 members of the organisation had been to China; we had given 41 performances in 6 cities and travelled in all, something under 25,000 miles. We had managed to see a great deal of the cultural and social life of present-day China and made many friends, particularly amongst the artists. From all that one could hear from diplomatic sources, our trip had been very successful in showing the Chinese not only a little of English ballet but also young English people.

I am sure that no tour has ever been organised with such consideration for the artists and we were always very conscious of the important rôle we played as the first Western theatrical group to visit China since the Revolution. I hope that we shall be able to return soon and, in the meantime, that it will be possible for English people to see more of China's wonderful opera companies, paintings, prints, and many of the other art treasures in which that great country is so rich.

COVER STORIES

This month's front cover, by Mike Davis, is of John Gilpin and Marilyn Burr in the *pas de deux* from the last act of London's Festival Ballet's new production of *The Nutcracker* which is being given for the Christmas season at Festival Hall.

GILPIN was first taught by Tina Pearce of Southsea. He went to the Cone-Ripman School in 1939 after being awarded a scholarship. After several appearances in plays and films as a straight child actor, he joined Ballet Rambert in 1945. In this company he danced many principal rôles and created new ones in works by Howard and Gore. Returning from an Australian tour in 1949, he joined Roland Petit's Ballets de Paris, and later the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas. He became a principal dancer of Festival Ballet at its outset in 1950 and has remained there ever since. Gilpin has become one of Britain's leading male dancers and has won great international fame.

BURR was born in Australia and received her first training from Leon Kellaway there. She made her début with the National Ballet of Australia in 1948. Coming to England four years later she joined the New Ballet Company. In 1953 she joined London's Festival Ballet as a soloist but she showed such promise that she rapidly reached the status of principal dancer. She is married to Festival Ballet's soloist, Louis Godfrey.

Ballet Dates

THE ROYAL BALLET
(formerly Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet)
at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

Dec.
26 (M) *Pineapple Poll*, *A Blue Rose* (world première), *The Angels* (world première)
26 (E) *Pineapple Poll*, *A Blue Rose*, *The Angels*
28 (M) *Veneziana* (revival), *A Blue Rose*, *The Angels*
Jan.
1 *Giselle* (Alexander, Bennett), *Pineapple Poll*
2 *Les Sylphides*, *The Burrow* (world première), *Veneziana*
8 *Les Sylphides*, *The Burrow*, *Veneziana*
10 *Veneziana*, *Giselle* (Heaton, Zolan)
15 *A Blue Rose*, *The Burrow*, *Pineapple Poll*
17 *Les Sylphides*, *The Angels*, *The Burrow*, *A Blue Rose*

Provincial Tour

Jan.
20 The Essoldo Theatre, Brighton
27 To be announced
Feb.
3 The Theatre Royal, Norwich
10 Arts Theatre, Cambridge (2 weeks)
24 The Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon
Mar.
3 The Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton
10 The Pavilion, Bournemouth
17 The Palace, Plymouth
24 The New Theatre, Cardiff

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at the Royal Festival Hall, London

Dec. 24 to Jan 11
New production of *The Nutcracker* daily at 2.30 and 7.30

Provincial Tour

Jan.
13 The Gaumont Theatre, Southampton
20 The Odeon Theatre, Leeds
27 The De Montfort Hall, Leicester
Feb.
3 The Gaumont Theatre, Ipswich
24 The Gaiety Theatre, Dublin (2 weeks)
Mar.
10 The Grand Opera House, Belfast
Apr., May, June—European tour
July 14–Sept. 13—The Royal Festival Hall, London

BALLET RAMBERT

Dec.
24 B.B.C. Television
Jan.
13 Theatre Royal, York
20 Arts Council tour of Scotland (4 weeks)
Feb.
17 The Little Theatre, Middlesborough
24 Her Majesty's, Carlisle
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NEXT MONTH
LOOK FOR
A ROYAL BALLET DANCER

on the front cover of the February issue of DANCE AND DANCERS.

INSIDE: Two new ballets by the ROYAL BALLET at Covent Garden—JOHN CRANKO'S *The Angels* and Peter Wrights, *A Blue Rose* in review and pictures. Rehearsing KENNETH MACMILLAN'S *The Burrow*. FRANCOISE SAGAN'S three-act ballet in Monte Carlo. DULCIE HOWES on Ballet in South Africa. YVETTE CHAUVIRÉ on how she creates her roles. FESTIVAL BALLET'S new *The Nutcracker* at Festival Hall. All the regular features and many of immediate topical interest.

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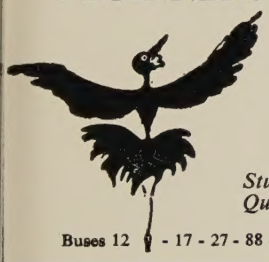

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